

SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE
1945-50



VALLABHBHAI AS A SCHOOLBOY



LADBAI, MOTHER OF SARDAR PATEL

SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE

1945-50

VOLUME II

**ELECTIONS TO CENTRAL & PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES—
DIRECTION OF CONGRESS CAMPAIGN**

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This volume is the second in a series of 10 volumes of correspondence of the late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

The correspondence starts on 1 October 1945 and covers the period from the transfer of power, which began under Lord Wavell's Viceroyalty after the release of the Congress Working Committee members from their long detention in Ahmednagar fort, and extends to the Sardar's death on 15 December 1950. This period marked the dawn of India's independence, involving partition, and finally its emergence as a sovereign democratic republic. Among those who played a crucial role in this historic process, the Sardar was one of the most outstanding.

The value of the correspondence as source material for the researcher and historian is apparent. It sheds light on the baffling problems that stood in the path of Indian unity and independence and the part the Sardar, along with Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru, played in countering the policy of the British Government and the divisive tactics of the Muslim League which worked hand in glove with the representatives of the Raj in India.

Independence brought to the fore the problems of the holocaust caused by partition, the rehabilitation of millions of refugees, welding together the bits and pieces which formed British and Princely India and consolidation of our hard-won freedom. The correspondence reveals in abundant measure the exertions of the Sardar in this connection in this last, epochal phase of his life which have earned an imperishable name in the annals of modern India.

These letters are being published 21 years after the death of the Sardar. This has been done in response to repeated demands to their guardians that they would serve the national interest by doing so, especially in view of the unjust and uncharitable criticism of the Sardar in some quarters. This argument assumed force after the release of Maulana Azad's posthumous publication—India Wins Freedom. Friends and admirers of the Sardar thought this made publication of the correspondence imperative. •

The Sardar was too great a personality to be dragged into controversies born of prejudices. He moulded the history of his

times and the future, and died satisfied that he had done his duty by his country. He took a detached view of life and left it to the generations and historians of the future to assess his role in attaining and consolidating freedom. His views on Tibet and China stand vindicated, and so also are his ideas about the future of East Pakistan, which has now emerged as independent Bangla Desh.

The Sardar wanted to build a strong united India nurtured by its own traditions and thought. He believed that only such a dynamic nation could contribute to world peace. At this distance in time, we can see the events of those fateful years in their proper perspective. Moreover, the nation is again passing through very critical times. This is therefore the opportune moment for placing these papers in the hands of his countrymen. The correspondence has been arranged as far as possible chronologically and episode-wise. It throws light on an aspect of the Sardar's work which has so far remained obscure.

We owe a word of gratitude to Sardar's daughter, Kumari Maniben Patel. After the Sardar's death, she preserved these papers with great care and readily agreed to their publication. Not only this, she had a hand in the meticulous scrutiny and compilation of these papers. By her efforts the authenticity of these records has been vouchsafed and the Navajivan Trust has been able to publish them with a sense of redeeming a part of its debt to the Sardar.

We are grateful to Shri Durga Das, a veteran journalist of New Delhi, who in the line of duty witnessed, chronicled, and even participated in many of the events of this stirring period. We therefore decided to approach him to undertake the arduous task of editing the voluminous correspondence. He has processed this vast accumulation of material with professional skill, arranging it thematically and making it meaningful to the average reader. For him this has been a labour of love. We also thank his aides and the staff of the Navajivan Trust who assisted in bringing this massive undertaking to a successful close.

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FOREWORD

The correspondence of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, published in ten volumes, covers a crucial period in India's history: 1 October 1945 to 12 December 1950, three days before his death in Bombay.

The letters and annexures consist of exchanges between Sardar Patel on the one hand and Lord Wavell, Lord Mountbatten, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, rulers of Princely States, Premiers of Congress Ministries and scores of Congressmen belonging to the party rank and file, on the other. These relate to various matters which arose in the domestic, international, constitutional, administrative and economic spheres in this period and thus constitute valuable source material of history. They were in the custody of Miss Maniben Patel, the Sardar's daughter, and were deposited by her with the Navajivan Trust in Ahmedabad after his death.

The Trust arranged, under her direction and supervision, to have them typed in Ahmedabad and send the copies to me for editing and compilation. The volumes are thus based on authentic copies of the correspondence deposited with the Trust.

Explaining the time-lag in releasing the correspondence, Maniben said in a long talk she had with me in New Delhi in late 1970 that she had held it back until she was certain that its publication would not be harmful to the nation for which her father had laboured and suffered so much. The letters contain matter relating to affairs of State and party organisation whose untimely disclosure might have embarrassed the Government or the political leaders of the day.

Since, however, some of the correspondence in the possession of other parties and relating to isolated events had been made public, she decided that the time had come to release the correspondence to give a balanced picture of the events to which they relate or of the Sardar's views. "I have been late," she said, "but not too late."

The Navajivan Trust, she added, had agreed to publish the correspondence and had thus made it possible for the people of India and the world outside to have access to this valuable material which throws new light on the momentous developments

of the period covered by these papers and the calculations made by the leading personalities of the day in shaping the course of history.

The significance of the correspondence lies in the light it sheds on the main characters on the Indian stage as they acted and reacted to the challenges of the time and to the problems posed by their differing approach and outlook. There is indeed hardly a national or regional issue of consequence in contemporary history the origin of which cannot be traced to the five crucial years.

Vallabhbhai Patel emerges from the correspondence as a great organiser and consolidator of modern India. Over 70 when he assumed ministerial office for the first time, he carried on his ailing shoulders the crushing burden of building the political infrastructure of the new India. Death prevented him from completing his task, but what he achieved in five short years endures.

These volumes are the bones and sinews of Indian history of a crucial period. To the scholar and researcher, they offer a treasure of source material. To the politician, they should serve as a guide. To the citizen, they provide inspiration.

Arrangements are in chronological order and not by topic. But the letters have been grouped thematically to retain interrelation of events and negotiations. Correspondence of a routine nature has been omitted and a few excisions have been made out of regard for the susceptibilities of the persons concerned. Such excisions are indicated by dots.

Where an extract or extracts from a letter are published, this is indicated by the word 'Extracts' at the top of the letter. The omissions have been effected by the persons entrusted by Maniben Patel and the Navajivan Trust with selecting the material for publication.

In several instances, letters, enclosures and other documents referred to in the published correspondence are not to be found in these volumes. It is hoped that future researchers will be able to fill these gaps.

The yardstick which the Sardar applied to public life and to political and socio-economic issues was forgotten or ignored by his successors with consequences which became apparent in the confused state of politics in the 1960s. India has again entered the most crucial period in the evolution of its polity. The stand taken by the Sardar on various issues and his vision of the road which India should take have acquired a new relevance.

Each volume of the series contains an outline of the contents of the other nine volumes in the form of a summary of the main features. This should help researchers ascertain at a glance what the whole series contains. The details of arrangements for selection and presentation of the correspondence were explained in the Foreword to the first volume, and are not therefore recapitulated here. The feature "Focus on Sardar" giving the views of Maniben Patel and the "Chronology of Principal Events in Sardar's Life" given in Volume I are retained in this volume and will be reproduced in succeeding volumes.

DURGA DAS

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CHRONOLOGY OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN SARDAR'S LIFE

- 1875 Born on 31 October at Nadiad, Kaira district, Gujarat. Fourth son of Jhaverbhai Patel, a farmer of Karamsad in the same district, and Ladbai. Belonged to agricultural caste known as Leuva Patidar. Schooling up to English third standard at Karamsad.
- 1891 English 4th and 5th standards at Petlad, a small town seven miles from Karamsad. Lived in a rented room with four or five other boys, with seven days' ration. Walked from Karamsad to Petlad every week.
- 1893 At the age of 18 married Jhaverba of Gana, a small village three miles from Karamsad.
- 1897 Matriculated from a high school in Nadiad, Kaira district, at 22.
- 1900 Passed District Pleaders' Examination. Studied with books borrowed from friends. Set up independent practice at Godhra, headquarters of Panchmahals district, Gujarat. Contracted bubonic plague from a court nazir whom he nursed when an epidemic broke out in Godhra.
- 1902 Shifted practice to Borsad, where he quickly made a name as a criminal lawyer.
- 1905 Saved enough money to go to England to become a barrister, but postponed departure in deference to the wishes of his elder brother Vithalbhai, who came to know about his plan and wished to go first. Looked after his brother's wife while he was away.
- 1909 Wife Jhaverba died after an operation in Bombay. Received a telegram containing news of her death while arguing a murder case in Borsad, but continued case until hearing was completed. In spite of pressure from friends and relations, refused to marry again.
- 1910 Left for England. Admitted to Middle Temple.
- 1911 Passed preliminary examination with honours, standing first in Equity. Fell ill with a tropical disease unknown in England. Doctors wanted to amputate his leg, but a German

doctor intervened and cured him through an operation which he underwent without chloroform.

1912 Took final examination after sixth term instead of usual 12. Stood first in first class, winning a prize of £50 and exemption from two terms. Sailed for India the day after convocation.

1913 Reached Bombay on 13 February. Refused post in Judicial Department as a lecturer in Government Law School, Bombay, and left for Ahmedabad, where he established himself as foremost criminal lawyer.

1915 Member, Gujarat Sabha, which was converted into Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee in 1919.

1917 Elected member of Ahmedabad Municipal Board. Election challenged and set aside. Stood in a by-election and was returned unopposed. Mahatma Gandhi, president of the first Gujarat Provincial Conference, appointed an executive committee with Patel as secretary. Impressed by Gandhi's leadership of the agitation against the British indigo planters of Champaran, Bihar.

Conducted agitation against begar (forced labour for Government purposes). Led agitation against the appointment of a British member of the Indian Civil Service as Municipal Commissioner and secured his removal.

As Chairman of the Sanitary Committee of Ahmedabad, stayed on in city when most of the citizens went away during an epidemic of plague. Took a leading role in helping sufferers and enforcing precautionary measures.

1918 Organised famine relief works in Ahmedabad district. Represented textile mill labour with Gandhi and Shankarlal Banker before a tribunal appointed to hear a dispute between labour and millowners.

Put up a temporary hospital in city with grant from Municipal Board to Gujarat Sabha to combat severe influenza epidemic. Organised no-tax campaign in Kaira district along with Gandhi. During campaign Gandhi said he was testing Patel, adding later that Patel had turned out to be "pure gold." Chairman, Sanitary Committee and Public Works Committee of Ahmedabad Municipality.

Helped Gandhi in recruitment drive for British Indian Army. They used to walk together for miles and cooked their own food.

- 1919 Chairman, Managing Committee, Ahmedabad Municipal Board.

Organised movement against Rowlatt Bills designed to strangle movement for self-rule. Led big demonstration march in Ahmedabad on 6 April and addressed public meeting against bills. Sold publicly Gandhi's proscribed books, Hind Swaraj and Sarvodaya, and published Satyagraha Patrika in Gujarati without official declaration or permission. Government took no action.

Helped local authorities restore peace and order after large-scale disturbances leading to martial law in Ahmedabad after arrest of Gandhi.

Served with a show-cause notice for cancellation of his sanad (permit to practice law) for participating in a public meeting advocating satyagraha. Case ended with a warning. Refused to pay fine imposed by Government as penalty for riots in city. Sofa attached and auctioned for Rs. 100.

- 1920 Organised campaign of Congress Party in elections to Ahmedabad Municipal Board. Congress captured almost all elected seats. Discarded Western dress and adopted khadi dhoti, kurta and chappals. Burnt all his foreign clothes. Way of life also changed to traditional pattern in Gujarat. Organised a conference of political workers of Gujarat in Ahmedabad and persuaded it to adopt a resolution supporting Gandhi's civil disobedience movement.

In response to Gandhi's call at Nagpur session of Congress to collect money for Tilak Swaraj Fund, promised to raise Rs. 1 million and enrol 300,000 party members in Gujarat. Fulfilled these promises within three months.

- 1921 Elected chairman of Reception Committee of 36th session of Congress held at Ahmedabad. For first time, delegates sat on floor and the session set new pattern in simplicity, austerity and businesslike proceedings.

Built a hospital and maternity home on 21 acres of land along Sabarmati river at site of session. The fountain built at that time is still there.

- 1922 Government of Bombay suspended Ahmedabad Municipality after a sharp tussle over supervision of municipal

schools. Organised schools under People's Primary Education Board with public contributions. Municipality suspended. Collected Rs. 1 million for Gujarat Vidyapith in a tour which took him up to Rangoon.

1923 All-India Congress committee deputed him to conduct satyagraha at Nagpur in connection with British District Commissioner's ban on flying national flag in cantonment area.

Resisted Bombay Government's levy of punitive tax on people of Borsad who were charged with harbouring criminals. Tax withdrawn. Called Suba of Borsad.

1924 Ahmedabad Municipality reinstated. Fresh elections gave Congress Party a decisive majority in enlarged Municipal Council. Elected President of municipality.

1924-1927 Passed a resolution giving notice to Ahmedabad Cantonment to pay water tax from 1920 at rate of eight annas. If tax was not paid, threatened to cut off water connection. Tax paid under protest.

Introduced khadi uniform in municipality. Municipal work was conducted in Gujarati after he became President. His scheme for supplying pure water passed.

Completed drainage scheme during term as President. Collected all arrears of municipal tax not paid by high officials, some well-to-do people and municipal councillors by cutting water connections and attaching properties.

1927 Unprecedented rainfall caused great damage and hardship throughout Gujarat. Saved Ahmedabad from floods by getting culverts breached. Organised relief measures for flood sufferers with public contributions. Promoted grow-more food and fodder campaigns and opened shops to sell high-quality gram, cereal and cotton seed for sowing at low cost to farmers. Received more than Rs. 10 million from Government earmarked for famine relief. A new party emerged in Ahmedabad Municipality. Clashed with it over appointment of chief officer.

1928 Resigned presidency. Led peasant agitation in Bardoli taluka, Surat district, against increase in land revenue rates. Bombay Government punished farmers for non-payment by confiscating and auctioning land, crops and other property.

As agitation continued unabated, Government agreed to restore all unsold confiscated land, release satyagrahis, reinstate dismissed village officers and reduce land tax. Named Sardar of Bardoli and thereafter known as Sardar Patel. Presided over first local self-government conference in Surat.

1929 Presided over Maharashtra Political Conference in Poona. Toured Maharashtra, mobilising public opinion against enhanced land taxes and untouchability.

Presided over Kathiawar Political Conference at Morvi. Toured Madras Presidency at request of C. Rajagopalachari. Presided over Tamil Nadu Political Conference at Vedaranyam. Reiterated support for Congress resolution of dominion status at conference against supporters of complete independence. Also visited Karnatak and Bihar.

At Calcutta session of Congress advocated support to all-party committee headed by Motilal Nehru which recommended acceptance of dominion status as India's political goal, provided demand was granted within two years. Motilal Nehru, Congress President, moved a resolution from chair congratulating Patel and peasants of Bardoli on victory over British bureaucracy. Nominated in September as a candidate for presidency of Congress session at Lahore but withdrew in favour of Jawaharlal Nehru.

1930 Arrested on 7 March while addressing a public meeting at Ras village, near Borsad, a few days after Gandhi announced march to Dandi near Surat, to break salt law. Preceded marchers to arrange accommodation and food on way. Sentenced to three months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500 or three weeks' additional imprisonment. Refused to pay fine and lodged in Sabarmati jail, Ahmedabad.

Went on hunger-strike in jail, requesting C class diet instead of A class. Request granted. Released on 26 June.

Arrested when leading a procession in Bombay on 31 July and sentenced to three months' jail. Taken to Yeravda jail near Poona. On release, made a speech at Khadi Bhandar, for which he was arrested. Sentenced to nine months' imprisonment in the second week of December.

1931 Released from jail in March under Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Presided over 46th Congress session at Karachi in last

week of March. Helped Gandhi in his discussions with Viceroy (Lord Irwin) in Simla in last week of August on Congress participation in First Round Table Conference in London.

- 1932 Arrested at 4 a.m. on 4 January and taken by car to Yeravda and imprisoned with Gandhi there for 16 months. Mother died at Karamsad.
- 1933 Transferred to Nasik jail on 1 August. Elder brother Vithalbhai died in Switzerland on 22 October. Rejected terms on which Government offered to release him on parole for two days to perform funeral rites.
- 1934 Developed serious nasal trouble in jail and released on 14 July. Issued statement accepting Gandhi's decision to leave Congress on 24 September. Congress decided at its annual session in Bombay in October to contest elections to Central Legislative Assembly. Undertook tour of many parts of country campaigning for party candidates. British Government allowed Jinnah to go to North-West Frontier. Sardar also sought and obtained permission to do so. But after going there was not allowed to visit Bannu district.
- 1935 Organised relief work in Borsad taluka where plague had broken out in four successive summers. Organised relief for victims of Quetta earthquake from Bombay, where he was laid low with jaundice.
 Sir Roger Lumley, Governor of Bombay, invited Sardar to a meeting and offered him premiership of Bombay Presidency, but added that land confiscated from farmers in Bardoli and sold would not be returned to owners. Sardar replied: "I am not going to be premier and the land will be returned to the peasants."
 President of Third Local Self-Government Conference at Broach.
- 1936 Collected Rs. 49,000 for Harijan Fund in two days in February. Appointed Chairman of Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee to select party candidates for provincial elections under Government of India Act 1935. Guided Congress Ministries after acceptance of office.
- 1937 Involved in a controversy with K. F. Nariman, President of Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, over selection of premier for Bombay Presidency.

- 1938 Involved in July in controversy on a constitutional issue with Dr. N. B. Khare, Prime Minister of Central Provinces. Khare accused Sardar of conspiring to oust him from office and resigned from Government and Congress. Efforts to impose central party discipline on provincial leaders earned him title Dictator of India. Presided over Kathiawar Rajkiya Parishad. Narrowly escaped attempt to kill him. Visit to Mysore city resulted in Government of Mysore State agreeing to flying of Congress flag in its territory. Flew to Rajkot on 24 December for talks with Thakore Saheb of Rajkot, who signed agreement on release of prisoners in Rajkot State and offered Sardar a portfolio in his Council of Ministers.
- 1939 Subhas Chandra Bose defied Gandhi, Patel and other members of Working Committee and got elected President of Congress at Haripura session because Maulana Azad withdrew at last moment.
- Thakore Saheb of Rajkot broke agreement and satyagraha was renewed in State early in the year.
- Bose's resolution for mass civil disobedience defeated at Tripura session in February. Bose described Sardar as "shining light of the ruling clique" and resigned presidency.
- Working Committee appointed a war sub-committee of three, including Vallabhbhai, in August. Warned provincial Congress organisations not to force a political crisis by hasty action.
- 1940 Replied in a public speech at Ahmedabad in October to Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for the Dominions, who had asked in House of Commons whether India was fit for independence. Sardar said: "If you lose the war, you will have lost everything, and even if you win, you will have suffered so heavily that your victory will be an empty one. At the end of the war, I declare no nation will remain subject to another. A great revolution is going to sweep the people everywhere. We shall see a new world emerge out of the fiery ordeal of this war." Arrested under Defence of India Act on 18 November for participating in satyagraha launched by Gandhi to press Britain for firm commitment on Indian independence. Imprisoned in Sabarmati jail and later transferred to Yeravda.

- 1941 Released on 20 August from detention on ground of health. Condemned communal killing in Ahmedabad at first public meeting after release. Treated for acute intestinal disorder.
- 1942 Participated in talks with Sir Stafford Cripps in New Delhi. Favoured acceptance of constitutional proposals put forward by Cripps provided they were modified to suit political conditions in India.
- 1942 Supported Quit India resolution at AICC meeting in Bombay
August on 8 August. Arrested at 4 a.m. on 9 August under Defence of India Act. Detained without trial at Ahmednagar fort with other Working Committee members.
- 1945 Transferred to Yeravda. Recurrence of intestinal trouble. Released on 15 June.
- Went to Simla during political talks between Viceroy (Lord Wavell) and Indian leaders.
- Entrusted with organising Congress election campaign for Central and provincial legislatures.
- Secured G. V. Mavalankar's election as Speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly in December.
- 1946 Issued call to Ministers in Congress Governments to work for eradication of untouchability.
- Disapproved Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's proposal for mass conversion of members of Scheduled Castes to other religions. If they changed religion, they could not claim benefits as Harijans.
- Persuaded revolting men of Royal Indian Navy to call off agitation in February as "the dawn of freedom is breaking and the sun will rise in a few months."
- If political issues between Britain and India could not be solved satisfactorily, India would withdraw from Bretton Woods Conference. Sardar said in March. Condemned suggestion that sterling balances should be scaled down. "Sterling credit is the economic foundation of India and this country's future progress largely depends upon it."
- Opposed Jinnah's demand for Pakistan, saying: "It is a monstrous thing that a man can claim a different nationality because he changes his religion." Hindus and Muslims were all basically Indians and thought as such. Congress

- could not accept the theory of Pakistan, happen what may. The two-nation theory would ruin all.

Declared in an exclusive interview with the political correspondent of Reuter that India would be prepared to refer major political issues to an international body for arbitration. Britain could not stay in India indefinitely. "Hand over power either to the Congress or to the Muslim League and go out of India," he said.

Advised withdrawal of trial of leaders of Indian National Army in Delhi.

Pleaded for fuller freedom to legislatures in Princely States and to Praja Mandals to select representatives to Constituent Assembly.

Appealed to Sikhs not to boycott Constituent Assembly even though Cabinet Mission had not done them justice.

Rejected possibility of a coalition between Muslim League and Congress.

Joined Viceroy's Executive Council as Home Member on 3 September. Announced in Central Legislative Assembly that foreigners would be appointed to senior administrative posts only in exceptional cases.

Accepted the principle of state control of industry, told Central Legislative Assembly that it was not desirable to go fast on nationalisation.

Spurned Jinnah's proposal for an exchange of population. Urged Muslim League to join Constituent Assembly and abandon its Pakistan policy.

- 1947 Talks with British Government representatives on transfer of control of services from Secretary of State to Interim Government and compensation for British officials completed. Statement on All India Radio's language policy announcing changes in existing practice.

Rejoinder to Jinnah: "Let an impartial tribunal decide the Pakistan issue, for Pakistan could be attained only on the basis of justice and understanding and not by force of arms."

Appealed to Muslim League to accept invitation to join talks and agree to arbitration by a "free power" in case of disagreement between League and Congress.

Told Princes to play their part in shaping India's destiny. Warned North-West Frontier Province Ministry headed by Khan Abdul Qayum Khan that Centre would not submit to rowdyism and threats.

Interim Government's proposals on compensation to British officials accepted by Attlee Government. Demanded dominion status for India "at once" so that a strong Centre could deal firmly with threats to law and order. Statement issued on outbreak of riots in Dera Ismail Khan and elsewhere in NWFP.

Rulers of Dholpur, Nabha and Nawanagar told Sardar in New Delhi of their decision to join Constituent Assembly. States Department created and entrusted to Sardar. Described Jinnah's demand for a land corridor linking West Pakistan with the eastern wing as "fantastic nonsense." Assured Princes that "internal autonomy" of their states would be respected.

Patel Committee's report on minorities submitted to Constituent Assembly. Report recommended joint electorates, representation in Ministries at Centre and in states and other safeguards.

Insisted on stationing a brigade of Indian Army in Kathiawar to protect states acceding to Indian Union from apprehended attack from Junagadh.

Persuaded Government to overrule Mountbatten and entrust Indian Army with operations against Nawab of Junagadh.

Pledged Government protection to Muslims staying in India. Said forced conversions and marriages would not be recognised.

Announced full agreement between India and Pakistan on all outstanding issues relating to partition, including division of armed forces. Said Kashmir had not been referred to Inter-Dominion Partition Committee. Announced in Constituent Assembly financial settlement between India and Pakistan under which India would transfer Rs. 750 million to Pakistan as a "great gesture of goodwill."

Addressed Orissa rulers in Cuttack. They agreed to merge their territories with Orissa province.

Announced at public meeting in Jammu that "everything possible" would be done to save Kashmir, "and this assurance I am conveying on behalf of the Government of India." Praised Sheikh Abdullah's role in ensuring Kashmir's accession to India.

1948 Appealed to labour leaders of West Bengal to support popular Government. Warned Pakistan that if it wanted further division of the country, "let us do it in the open field." Asked Indian Muslims: "In the recent all-India Muslim Conference, why did you not open your mouths on the Kashmir issue? Why did you not condemn the action of Pakistan? These things create doubts in the minds of the people."

Declared in a statement: "Unless the Kashmir issue is settled, the financial pact between India and Pakistan cannot be implemented. . . . Let there be no mistake that Kashmir belongs to India."

Declared at Patna* that abolition of zamindari without compensation would be nothing short of robbery.

Appealed to Nizam of Hyderabad to respect his people's wishes and accede to India.

Inaugurating Rajasthan Union, said that only by coming together could smaller states save themselves from anarchy and confusion.

In message on formation of Vindhya Pradesh, said: "Unification and democratisation would be purposeless if they did not bring about improvement in the lot of the people."

Warned British politicians and Press to halt propaganda against India. Blamed Churchill for India's partition and attendant disasters.

Rejected compromise on Hyderabad. Accession and responsible government were India's minimum demands.

Said in an eve of independence speech: "In free India there is no room for divided loyalties."

Informed Parliament that "action would be taken against Hyderabad for breach of the standstill agreement."

Congratulated Defence Services on their remarkable success in the "police action" in Hyderabad.

Indicted UN for mishandling Kashmir issue. "We accepted the UN Commission's cease-fire proposals, but the other

party did not. We could perform the Kashmir operation without danger if only we could free ourselves from our commitments."

Referring to Pakistan and its anti-Indian propaganda, said: "I wonder whether they are really afraid of us, or is this outburst merely an attempt to preserve their unity?"

Inaugurated Advisory Board of Central India States. Praised Nehru's leadership on his 60th birthday, saying: "Pandit Nehru has led the country through the crisis and has by his great leadership enhanced the prestige of India. We want our leader to remain at the helm for many years."

1949 Announced merger of five Princely States of Rajputana—Bikaner, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Udaipur—to form Rajasthan Union and hailed it as a momentous development.

Advised Maharaja of Baroda to merge his State with Bombay.

Challenged contention of Nawab of Bhopal that paramountcy had lapsed with British withdrawal from India.

Warned Communists that if they continued to oppose Government and create danger they would be dealt with severely.

Opposed demand for linguistic states because consolidation of country must precede revision of boundaries.

Appealed to members of Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh to join Congress.

Advised South Indians to learn Hindi.

Appealed for public contributions to rebuild Somnath temple in Junagadh.

Announced in Hyderabad that responsible government would be introduced in former Nizam's State only after normalcy was restored.

Warned Master Tara Singh in a speech at Amritsar that he was following suicidal policies.

Advised RSS to concentrate on regenerating Hindu society through constitutional and constructive methods.

Inaugurated Rajasthan State in Jaipur.

Announced take-over of administration of Bhopal State by Centre and congratulated Nawab on his understanding

and self-sacrifice. Declared that welfare of Muslims would be prime concern of State's new administration.

At a public meeting at Indore, warned Congress politicians in newly formed states unions that he would dissolve ministries and administer unions centrally if they did not stop their petty squabbles and tussles for power.

Told All-India Depressed Classes Leagues Confederation: "India's independence will not be completed until every Harijan claims, and actually gets, equality of status."

Moving consideration of report of Advisory Committee on Minorities in Constituent Assembly, said: "Minority concessions, though not good in themselves, have to be treated as purely temporary. Minorities should voluntarily agree to abolition of reservations for them in services and legislatures."

Supported grant of privy purses to princes in return for accession to Indian Union.

1950 Warned Pakistan against pushing Hindus out of eastern wing.

Defended in Parliament use of preventive detention to fight terrorism and violence.

Gave details of democratic set-up for Delhi Union Territory. Appealed at a public meeting in Calcutta for fair trial to Nehru-Liaquat Pact on minorities.

Told public meeting at Indore that Congress "is fully behind Nehru." Called for revolution in system of education in address to Gujarat Vidyapith.

Opened newly constructed building of Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad. Purse of Rs. 1.5 million presented on behalf of Gujarat on his 75th birthday, which he immediately handed over to President of the Provincial Congress Committee.

Declared that accepting aid from United States did not mean alignment with any power bloc. UNO should be strengthened.

Deplored Chinese intervention in Tibet and use of force against Tibetans.

Fell ill on 15 November. Taken to Bombay on Tuesday, 12 December. Died on Friday morning, 15 December.

FOCUS ON SARDAR

An illuminating picture of Sardar Patel's activities and style of work was provided by his daughter Maniben. What follows are extracts from the information and views given by her to Trevor Driberg and the Editor in New Delhi:

The Sardar was a man of few words. He wrote very little; he hardly kept any record of his public or party work. He destroyed letters addressed to him after reading them and replied by hand, not keeping copies. But after he was appointed Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Board in 1934, files relating to its transactions were kept.

When the Sardar fell ill towards the end of the Bardoli satyagraha in 1928, it was suggested that somebody should give him secretarial help. I said: "If someone is to be kept, why not I?" From 1929 until his death, I preserved his correspondence whenever possible. Once, when K. Gopalaswami, political commentator of the Times of India, visited him in his flat on Marine Drive, Bombay, the Sardar called for a letter he had received from C. Rajagopalachari, forgetting that he had torn it up and thrown it in the wastepaper basket. Fortunately, I had collected the pieces. It took me some time to paste them together before passing it on to him. This happened before the Interim Government was formed.

The Sardar travelled second-class by railway before he became a Minister. I would spread his bedding at night and retire to a third-class compartment. But from 1934, when there was much correspondence to attend to even on train journeys and people came to see him at stations, I kept company with him in his second-class compartment. I used to make copies of important letters he wrote in hand, but he would question this, asking why I was taking such trouble and wasting time. I also kept newspaper clippings of important events with which he was associated.

The Sardar read several newspapers and listened to radio news bulletins regularly. This enabled him to keep abreast of developments throughout the country. He also talked to people to get information to supplement other sources.

After 1945, the secretarial functions of the Congress Parliamentary Board were undertaken mainly by Shantilal Shah. The Sardar was undergoing treatment for intestinal trouble at the

Nature Cure Clinic, Poona, when he sent for Shantilal Shah from Bombay. Shah, a Congress Socialist, hesitated at first because he did not know what was in store for him. But B. G. Kher (Premier of Bombay) advised him to take up the work. The Sardar told Shah he wanted him to act as his Secretary at the Parliamentary Board office located at the headquarters of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee.

The Sardar was a very shrewd judge of character. When he met a person for the first time he looked him up and down, and the assessment he made in that process rarely went wrong.

Once when Mathuradas Trikamji, Mayor of Bombay, asked what kind of men he kept round him, the Sardar replied that his was a "juggler's basket." He kept all kinds of people for the single aim of winning India's freedom. He used different people for different purposes. He was fully aware of their weaknesses and drawbacks but exploited their useful qualities.

The Sardar learnt punctuality in his youth when he had to do everything for himself. This experience taught him to save time by doing things according to schedule. This gave him self-reliance and at the same time an appreciation of the difficulties other people encountered. He walked on business errands rather than use transport. This habit served him well in London when he was attending the Inns of Court. He used to walk from his lodgings to the law library, a distance of several miles daily. He could not afford to buy books for study, and was at the library when the librarian opened it and left at closing time every evening.

The visit to England fulfilled two of my father's ambitions. He wanted to see the country from which people had come to conquer India and to qualify as a barrister. He had seen how even mediocre lawyers had been able to build up a large practice because they had been to London to study for the Bar. On his return to Ahmedabad, he established himself as the city's leading criminal lawyer.

When he was a district pleader at Borsad in the early 1900s, there was a British magistrate who kept a mirror in his court to study the faces of witnesses. This made witnesses nervous and the magistrate drew conclusions from their behaviour about their truthfulness. The Sardar thought of a plan to make the officer behave. He demanded transfer to the district court of a case in which he was appearing before the magistrate. The Sardar presented him with a sealed letter. The magistrate opened the letter and saw his name

heading the list of witnesses for the defence. He called the Sardar to his chamber for a talk. The accused was acquitted and the magistrate stopped using the mirror conceding that he had no right to do so. This incident illustrates a facet of my father's character. He had no fear of the British magistracy or administrators.

The Sardar was a man of regular habits and disliked armchair politicians. He read about Gandhiji's action in Champaran and was impressed by his methods of organising peasants to resist exploitation and oppression. Mahatma Gandhi was preoccupied with the agitation in Bihar and wanted somebody who would give up everything and devote all his time to the satyagraha campaign in Kaira district organised as a protest against excessive land revenue. My father volunteered his services, and they were accepted.

Until that time the Sardar wore European dress. He was so fastidious that finding no good laundry in Ahmedabad he got his stiff collars washed in Bombay.

From early youth, the Sardar developed the qualities of leadership and discipline. In later life, these qualities were to help him in organising large groups of people for action. Until the Bardoli movement, he was hardly known outside Gujarat. He did not go out of Gujarat until Gandhiji's sentence of imprisonment for six years in 1922, when he went on a fund-raising mission for the Gujarat Vidyapith as far east as Rangoon.

For years in Gujarat, whenever Gandhiji addressed a public meeting the Sardar did not speak at it and later, when the Sardar spoke, other Congress leaders did not speak. This is an illustration of the discipline observed by Congressmen at the time. The leader spoke for them and the others showed their loyalty by action.

When Gandhiji started the swadeshi movement and burning of foreign clothes, the Sardar burnt all his European clothes, socks and hats. He never wore any type of headgear, even a khadi cap, after he cast aside his black Banglori cap. From then, he always wore dhoti and kurta and a chaddar on his shoulder, adding only a warm jacket in winter.

The satyagraha in Borsad Taluka, Kaira district, lasted a month. The provincial Government had levied a punitive tax of eight annas—a large sum at that time—per person on all the inhabitants for the maintenance of the preventive police. Even children were taxed. The campaign succeeded and in this satyagraha he gained the title Suba of Borsad.

Another sphere in which the Sardar helped to raise the morale of the people of the area was connected with activities of dacoits. People dared not leave their house after 6 p.m. for fear of dacoits who infested the area. They appealed to the Sardar for help. He agreed, provided they did not allow their houses to be used for keeping stolen property.

In the Bardoli satyagraha, there was one organiser for every big village. The Sardar set out at noon from his headquarters and returned at midnight after visiting many villages. There was only one car, so all the other organisers journeyed on foot or by train or cart. The peasants accepted the Sardar as their unquestioned leader. Every morning, he received written reports from each village through volunteer messengers. The title Sardar of Bardoli was conferred on him by a party worker at a public meeting. It gained nationwide currency when Gandhiji started referring to him in this manner.

As head of Ahmedabad Municipality, the Sardar looked far ahead of immediate civic needs and planned accordingly, unlike some of his successors who made changes looking to short-term gains.

His qualities of leadership were recognised when he organised relief measures during the floods that hit Gujarat in 1927. He went round Ahmedabad city with the chief engineer and ordered a culvert to be broken to let the flood waters flow into the Sabarmati river. This saved the city from total inundation. He also persuaded the Bombay Government to provide more than a crore of rupees for relief to the flood victims. He sent help to the Collector of Kaira when the district was cut off from the rest of Gujarat. Only the Collector's bungalow, which stood on a mound, was safe, and all the townfolk had gathered there for safety. The Sardar's men brought food and other necessities.

The Sardar went to Calcutta for the Congress session over which Motilal Nehru presided. Even though his name had become a household word as the hero of Bardoli his physical appearance was not known. The volunteers of the Congress failed to identify him and since he did not carry a ticket he was not admitted to the pandal. The next day he carried his membership card and the volunteers were surprised when they found people shouting for the darshan of the Sardar of Bardoli and that the hero was the person the volunteers had kept out the previous day.

The Sardar was favoured by the Provincial Congress Committees as the next party president, but Motilal Nehru wrote to

Gandhiji asking that Jawaharlal should succeed him. Motilal wanted to see his son Congress chief before he died. My father agreed with Bapu (Gandhiji) that Motilalji's wish be fulfilled.

It was usual for the Congress President to attend annual sessions with large retinues. The Sardar went to the Karachi session in 1931 with only me and an aide, thus cutting drastically the expenses of the reception committee.

The outlook of the Sardar and of Nehru was vastly different. They agreed to differ, but at the same time worked together for the common cause of India's freedom. The influence of Mridula Sarabhai and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai on Nehru was to a large extent responsible for the rift between my father and Jawaharlal.

The Sardar became the party boss from the time he became head of the Parliamentary Board. He was also the party's main fund-raiser. The Congress High Command, of which he was the mainspring, functioned as a moral prop for the Chief Ministers against the administrative machine directed by the British.

I used to sleep by the telephone to take calls that came at odd hours of the night so that the Sardar's sleep was not disturbed. I took down messages and passed them on to him the next morning. One such call came at midnight from Biswanath Das, then Premier of Orissa. He had decided to resign over the choice of a provincial official to act as Governor. The Sardar backed him and the Viceroy yielded.

I may recall a meeting the Sardar had with Bombay Governor Lumley in 1937 at Lumley's request. It lasted about an hour. Lumley told the Sardar that he would be Premier of Bombay, but the lands confiscated from the peasants of Bardoli would never be returned. The Sardar replied: "Note it down that I am not going to be Premier, and also that the lands will be returned to the peasants."

The Sardar took many unpopular decisions in party and Government matters, but his decisions were accepted because he had no axe to grind. He was not amenable to threats or blackmail. He had no property of his own and he was above extraneous considerations. He had nothing to lose, had no ambition and no desire to cling to office.

Once in Yeravda jail, Gandhiji asked in good humour what post he would like to hold after Independence. The Sardar replied he would become a sadhu. In 1945, when it had been decided to replace Azad as Congress President, the Sardar got the largest

share of votes in the Working Committee. But Kripalani, one of the candidates, withdrew in favour of Nehru and handed a paper to the Sardar to withdraw his nomination as well so that Nehru could be elected unopposed.

Gandhiji, to whom this matter was referred, told Nehru: "I don't want to make you a prop of mine if people don't want you." Nehru kept silent and was selected President. Gandhiji supported Nehru's choice as Prime Minister because he was well known outside India. He compared the Sardar and Nehru to two bullocks yoked to a cart. He felt that if Nehru was made Prime Minister he would be prevented from "making mischief" in the country.

When the Sardar became Home Member and later on Deputy Prime Minister, anybody could call on him during his morning walk from 4.30 to 6.30. He was a fast walker and few could keep pace with him. They told him what they wanted and then they would drop out when the dialogue was over. He gave brief answers and listened mostly. For party workers and others this was an opportunity for opening their hearts to him. At the end of an hour's listening, the Sardar would probably reply in a couple of words. He arranged assistance for even the humblest party worker who needed it. He provided hospitalisation if necessary. After his illness in March 1948 his medical advisers stopped morning walks completely and restricted his interviews.

In 1941, he was afflicted with severe intestinal trouble. He woke around 3.30 every morning because of pain in the bowels. He spent an hour in the toilet before setting out on his morning walk. He had a cup of tea and breakfast, which consisted of a piece of toast and apple juice. In these early morning hours, before going for a walk, I did my quota of spinning. When he assumed office his Private Secretary V. Shankar came in with office files after breakfast. The Sardar looked through the morning newspapers carefully and rarely missed any significant news. He gave oral instructions to Shankar. As before, he would write as little as possible. When in good health, he left home around 9.30 for the Home Ministry, returned for lunch and after a nap of 15 minutes went to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

I looked after the Sardar's Gujarati correspondence while Shankar attended to that in English. I passed on some of the correspondence in Hindi to Shankar. Morarji Desai had recommended Shankar as Private Secretary. The Sardar invited him to lunch to look him over before selecting him for the post.

The Partition Committee set up under the Mountbatten Plan and consisting of as many as 30 to 40 officers, would come to the Sardar's house and stay up to lunch receiving instructions from him. Its members had to report back to him in the evening. Every order he issued had to be executed within 24 hours. He rang up Premiers at night when he had a particular issue to discuss with them. He was against wasting money on telephone calls on matters that were not urgent. I kept a diary of all private trunk calls, for which Sardar paid out of his own pocket.

I recall another instance of his method of work. There was a crisis in the jute industry. The Sardar phoned C. C. Desai, Commerce Secretary, and M. P. Birla, Chairman of the Indian Jute Manufacturers' Association, Calcutta, and others every night to check on developments. Similarly, at the time of the Bombay riots and disturbances elsewhere, he made phone calls at night to find out what was happening. He made calls to Punjab and Bengal and UP at the time of the partition troubles.

The Sardar was not impolite or arrogant in his dealings with people. He replied promptly to correspondence. He read all the letters addressed to him personally and generally told the officer concerned how he should reply. He never signed letters or any other document blindly. When he was not fully satisfied with a draft, he would change it himself or ask the officer concerned to redraft it. He liked precision and conciseness in letters. He would say that this was "not a place for essays" or for exhibiting one's command of English.

Mountbatten recognised the Sardar's greatness. I was the only other person present when the Sardar had a talk with Bapu between 4 and 5 p.m. on the day of his assassination. Bapu had decided to release the Sardar from the Ministry at the latter's instance, but Mountbatten strongly opposed this because he felt that the Sardar "had his feet on the ground while Nehru had his in the clouds." He told Gandhiji that he could not release the Sardar. Gandhiji agreed and withdrew his decision.

It was agreed at the conversation on January 30 afternoon that Gandhiji, Nehru and the Sardar should sit together and iron out their differences. But this meeting was never held. The Sardar was greatly upset by the slander campaign against him at that time in certain Congress and Government circles. He was worried at heart that Gandhiji had to defend him continually against these slanders.

Previously, when Nehru lived at York Road and the Sardar just across on Aurangzeb Road, they used to meet every day, even though for a few minutes. Nehru would sometimes drop in after lunch, or in the evening or at night after dinner. They walked together and discussed matters. The Sardar would walk with Nehru up to the gate of the latter's house on York Road and see him off there or they would return together to Aurangzeb Road.

These daily meetings and talks cleared misunderstandings, but this dialogue became very difficult after Nehru moved to the house of the former Commander-in-Chief on Teen Murti Marg. If he had not moved there on Mountbatten's advice, much of their later differences might never have developed. Because of his illness, the Sardar was not able to go to Nehru's house frequently.

When there were party matters to be attended to, the Sardar requested the AICC General Secretary to call at his house for instructions. The Working Committee met at the Sardar's residence since there was no good AICC office building at that time in Delhi. The provincial Premiers constantly sought his guidance, and he was a great help to them in their encounters with members of the bureaucracy or party dissidents.

The administrations of the new states formed after integration lacked capable men to guide them. But in those areas where party members had carried out constructive work under the Sardar's direction before independence, such men were available. This was so in Kathiawar and Gujarat. Elsewhere in the country, party workers in the former states had only indulged in agitation and there was no solid foundation for their work.

The Sardar did not aspire to prime ministership or any other high office. He once said that if India had won Swaraj ten years earlier he would have solved the food problem as he had solved that of the states. He added: "But I have not the strength to do so now." He considered food the country's most important problem after consolidation. He was essentially a man of action, averse to writing. His philosophy of life may be summed up in the words: "Why not create history rather than waste time writing it?"

OUTLINE OF I-X VOLUMES

MAIN TOPICS

KASHMIR PROBLEM

1945-46

ELECTIONS

Working of Constituent Assembly and its parliamentary aspects
Interim Government and its working

Negotiations with Indian States—their place in future set-up
Bretton Woods Conference and other international conferences
Indian National Army

Provincial politics—Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Central
Provinces, Madras, Orissa, North-West Frontier Province,
Sind and United Provinces .

1947

NATIONAL ISSUES

Working of Central Government

- (i) Interim Union Government
 - (a) Before 15 August 1947
 - (b) After 15 August 1947
- (ii) External
 - (a) Ambassadorial appointments
 - (b) Indo-Nepal relations
 - (c) United Nations Organisation

Transfer of power

Partition

Communal flare-up

Refugee problem

STATES POLITICS

Hyderabad

Junagadh

Indian States

- (a) Accession
- (b) Integration
- (c) Democratisation

Indian Provinces

1948

Indian States and their problems

Hyderabad State

Indian Government—its working and problems

Gandhi assassination

Refugee problem—rehabilitation

Provincial politics

1949

Indian States and their problems

Hyderabad

Provincial politics

Central Government and its working and problems

Gandhi murder, Trial of accused

• **1950**

INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND ITS WORKING

Internal—Inter-ministerial correspondence

External—Commonwealth and India

China's aggression in Tibet

Constitutional—Constitution-making

New Head of State under Constitution

Role of Governor

STATES POLITICS

Indian States and their problems

Hyderabad issue

Provincial politics

HIGHLIGHTS—VOLUMES I AND III-X

VOL I: NEW LIGHT ON KASHMIR

This absorbing inside story of the events leading up to Independence and continuing subsequently till Sardar Patel's death in 1950 has not been told before. It contains the basic raw material for the research scholar and the historian. The correspondence published in this series opens with the efforts of Maharaja Hari Singh and his counsellors in Srinagar to shore up the feudal structure in Jammu and Kashmir by denial of democratic rights.

The Maharaja unleashed a campaign of repression against the National Conference, the political mouthpiece of the state people, arrested Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, its chief, and charged him with sedition. Jawaharlal Nehru entered Kashmir in defiance of the state Government's ban and courted arrest.

The Maharaja, finding that his hands were forced by the invasion of the state from Pakistan by armed "raiders," opted for India and, after signing the instrument of accession, agreed to the formation of a popular government under Sheikh Abdullah. The Maharaja and the Sheikh were soon at loggerheads. The Maharaja, under relentless pressure from New Delhi, surrendered power and placed himself in the hands of the Sardar, who, as the correspondence reveals, played a crucial role in the negotiations which led ultimately to the withdrawal of the Maharaja from the state and the succession of his heir, Yuvraj Karan Singh, as regent and finally as constitutional head of the state.

Patel also pointed out how India's case on Kashmir before the United Nations Security Council should have been effectively presented. The exchange of letters between him and the Sheikh foreshadows the strong differences on approach to the Kashmir problem which ultimately led to the Sheikh's removal from the prime ministership of the state in 1953. Abdullah went his own way, heedless of Patel's restraining influence.

VOL. III: GUIDANCE TO MINISTRIES—CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY PROBLEMS—INTERIM GOVERNMENT DEADLOCK— REFORMS IN INDIAN STATES

Elections to the Central and Provincial Assemblies were followed by the formation of a board consisting of Maulana

Azad, Sardar Patel and Dr. Rajendra Prasad to organise elections to the Constituent Assembly as proposed under the Cabinet Mission plan, aiding and guiding Provincial Congress Ministries, including the Coalition Ministry in the Punjab, and supervising the working of the Congress party in the Central Assembly. These tasks fell primarily on the shoulders of Sardar Patel, who functioned as a one-man High Command.

The political situation was complicated by several factors. The Governor of Sind, Sir Francis Mudie, manoeuvred to put the Muslim League in power. Direct Action Day, observed by the Muslim League on 16 August 1946, resulted in unprecedented communal carnage in Calcutta. There were riots in Bihar. The League refused to agree to the Cabinet Mission plan. Mahatma Gandhi's meetings with Lord Wavell failed to straighten matters. Patel attributed the deadlock over the formation of an Interim Coalition Government to bungling by the Viceroy.

An Interim Government, headed by Nehru and consisting of Congress party nominees, was formed on 2 September 1946. It was enlarged into a Congress-League coalition in the middle of October 1946. Soon after, Patel described the coalition, which was functioning without joint responsibility, as an arena of party politics and intrigue. He repeatedly drew Wavell's attention to the disruptionist role of the League members of the Government. He also tried to persuade him to bring Bengal under virtual martial law to restore peace and tranquillity. Problems of Indian National Army personnel, the Royal Indian Navy uprising, creation of the International Monetary Fund, shipping, trade, and the Secretary of States' Services were firmly and constructively handled by the Sardar.

The movement for reform in the Indian states sponsored by praja mandals received an impetus from political developments in British India. The meagre hope of success is revealed in a note Nehru forwarded to the Sardar of his talks with the Nawab of Bhopal in early April 1946. The Sardar, however, guided the movement into the right channel. The correspondence reveals the country in the throes of revolutionary change.

VOL. IV: TRANSFER OF POWER—COMMUNAL HOLOCAUST AND PARTITION—ADMINISTRATION AND STABILITY

The political deadlock dragged on from 1946 to 1947. All efforts of the Congress to avert partition failed as the League, instigated by sympathisers in the top echelons of the British

bureaucracy in India and Britain, stuck out for Pakistan. Finally, the Congress capitulated under heavy pressure and the twin states of secular, democratic India and Islamic, autocratic Pakistan were born, with Governor-General Mountbatten playing the role of midwife.

Partition and transfer of power were accompanied by the tragedy and turmoil of wholesale uprooting of populations, mass murder and looting and other acts of barbarity. The entire socio-economic structure of the affected provinces seemed on the verge of collapse. How the problem of restoring peace and sanity and resettling the uprooted and dispossessed victims of the trauma of partition was handled, primarily by Patel, with courage and firmness, is revealed in the correspondence.

While the Attlee Government in London and Mountbatten in New Delhi appeared to play fair by the Congress and the Indian people, British administrators continued to play politics at the lower levels and were instrumental in pushing Pakistan into a military adventure in Kashmir as part of their game to weaken India economically and politically. The Muslim League, which had grabbed power in Pakistan, eagerly collaborated in this game.

VOL. V: CONTROL OVER CONGRESS MINISTRIES— INDIAN STATES' ACCESSION

Creating conditions for stable government and maintaining law and order in the old provinces of British India after the disruption of partition was a major problem which was Patel's prime responsibility as Minister of Home Affairs. Relations between governors and chief ministers had to be redefined in the changed political context, and the Sardar was often called upon to mediate in disputes resulting from conflicting interpretations of rules and practices by those in authority.

Problems also arose from the emergence of factionalism in the provincial Congress organisations, and the Sardar had to exert his authority to prevent them from cracking up in the heat of local power struggles. The most notable instance was in Madras, where two rival factions were engaged in a bitter struggle which resulted in the ouster of Chief Minister T. Prakasam.

Rehabilitation of Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Pakistan was the key problem encountered in East Punjab, together with the intransigence of Master Tara Singh and the Akali Dal. In Assam, large-scale infiltration of Muslims created difficulties

for the provincial administration in the wake of the loss of Sylhet district to Pakistan. The inclusion of the tribal hill tracts in the province also presented difficulties as the hillsmen, ethnically and culturally different from the dwellers in the Brahmaputra Valley, wanted a separate identity. In the interests of national security in a sensitive region, they were brought together under one administration.

Bringing the conglomeration of Princely States within the ambit of the new integrated nation-state the Congress leaders envisaged after freedom also presented many problems, the solution of which rested on Patel's shoulders as Minister of States.

**Vol. VI: PATEL-NEHRU DIFFERENCES—ASSASSINATION OF GANDHI—
SERVICES REORGANISED—REFUGEE REHABILITATION**

Sardar Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru came to the brink of relinquishing office in each other's favour over differences, first, arising out of communal disturbances in Ajmer-Merwara and later snowballing into serious conflict over the definition of the functions of the Prime Minister in relation to his colleagues and the preparation of memoranda by both for presentation to Gandhi for his adjudication. The assassination of Gandhi at this crucial period acted, however, as a cementing bond between them. The Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh and similar organisations were banned.

C. Rajagopalachari was brought to the Centre as Governor-General in succession to Mountbatten. Restoring popular confidence after the Gandhi murder and curbing the extremist elements responsible for it without at the same time causing civil strife was the responsibility of Patel. The correspondence between Nehru and Patel on this subject reveals the different styles with which they functioned. Throughout the year, the influx of fresh waves of refugees and their rehabilitation continued to be a major preoccupation of the government, and it was Patel's lot to co-ordinate these tasks.

The difficulties encountered in providing cohesive and effective administrations in the provinces called for firm directives from Patel. In the United Provinces, the major conflict was between the veteran Congress leader Purushottamdas Tandon and Premier Pant and their political adversary Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. This was represented in the Press as a struggle between supporters of Patel and Nehru and a reflection of a power tussle at a higher level. Sharp differences arose in Assam between Governor Akbar Hydari and Chief Minister Gopinath Bardoloi,

while Communist activities became a cause of worry in this province and in neighbouring West Bengal.

VOL. VII : INTEGRATING INDIAN STATES—POLICE ACTION IN HYDERABAD

The year 1948 was significant for the introduction of responsible government in many Princely States, and also for the attempts of some princes to block this process. Integration talks were launched and new groupings of states came into existence with popular ministers to run them. Not long after their induction, Patel was called upon to deal with the squabbles within these governments as well as between them and the princely heads of the new unions.

The papers relating to the States of Hyderabad and Junagadh have been brought together, for their case stands apart from that of the other states which voluntarily merged in the Indian Union as a result of the patriotic impulse of their rulers, who read the signs of the times. While the ruler of Junagadh fled to Pakistan, the Nizam dreamt of carving out an independent state in the belly of the Indian Union.

With this end in view, the Nizam's agents went on an arms buying spree in Europe and organised bands of thugs to terrorise the predominantly Hindu population of his State. Secret negotiations were also started with the British for the addition of Bastar State to his domain and the retrocession of Berar, which had been incorporated in the Central Provinces. Advances were made to the Portuguese Government about providing access to Hyderabad through Goa to the Arabian Sea.

Here, as in other instances of princely opposition to joining India, the undercover manoeuvrings of British officials and politicians, keen on seeing India weak and divided after independence, played an important part in stiffening the resistance of the Nizam and the feudal clique which supported him. After vain attempts to persuade the Nizam to agree peaceably to joining the Indian Union, as the vast majority of his subjects demanded, the Indian Government organised a "police action" to effect the merger. The story ends with the Nizam's surrender and expression of complete confidence in Sardar Patel's political sagacity.

VOL. VIII: FOREIGN POLICY IN EVOLUTION—CONSTITUTION- MAKING—POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

The future of India's relations with the Commonwealth of Nations, ties with Nepal, recognition of Communist China and

disputes with Pakistan over canal waters, ill-treatment of minorities in Pakistan and evacuee property were important matters of foreign policy in which the Sardar made a significant contribution. The main task the Sardar undertook was to merge the Unions of Princely States with the adjoining states of the Indian Union, thus creating a bigger territorial unit than existed under the British or any former Raj.

Internally, differences arose over whether the first President of the Indian Republic should be C. Rajagopalachari or Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Nehru and Patel took different attitudes to mass agitation by the Akalis in East Punjab. The Hindu Code Bill was another issue on which eminent Congress leaders differed from the government's view.

The sentence of death was passed on 12 February on Nathuram Godse, the principal accused in the Gandhi murder case, and Patel overruled pleas for clemency. As Minister of Information and Broadcasting, he laid down a policy on the use of Hindi for the guidance of All India Radio.

VOL. IX: POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES—REFUGEES FROM EAST BENGAL—TERRITORIAL INTEGRATION OF PRINCELY STATES

Factionalism continued to cause administrative snarls in the states and provinces and to this were added charges of corruption and abuse of power against those in authority. The Sardar was deeply involved in trying to keep peace among the warring factions and weeding out the corrupt. A controversy erupted in West Bengal over the relative status of Bengali and Hindi for official purposes, and a movement for Greater Bengal, including East Pakistan, raised its head in the province.

Friction within the Madras Ministry was sharpened by popular demands for a separate Andhra Pradesh. Factions within the Punjab Congress came to be identified with Nehru and Patel. In Hyderabad, the Communists as well as communalists became active and caused anxiety to the State administration. The Communist-supported uprising of the peasants of Telengana, who employed force to dispossess the landlords and divide up their property, led to military operations against them.

• Communal riots broke out in West Bengal as more refugees streamed in from East Pakistan with stories of atrocities perpetrated on the Hindu minority there. The Congress party split in Andhra Pradesh at the same time as the Communists swung into

action in the region. Master Tara Singh strove hard to stir up communal feeling in the Punjab.

Nehru visited the United States. Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister, filled in for him. His confidential fortnightly letter of over 10,000 words to chief ministers of states elaborating his political, economic and administrative philosophy is in the nature of a will and testament.

**VOL. X: ACUTE POWER STRUGGLE---TRIUMPH OF MUTUAL
ACCOMMODATION---WARNING AGAINST CHINA**

The highlight of foreign affairs was the Chinese invasion of Tibet, an event which raised the problem of security along the Himalayan border. In letters to Nehru and CR, the Sardar underscored the potential threats to India's sovereignty from this source. Pakistan's persecution of minorities, incursions into Indian territory and general hostility were other matters of concern to New Delhi. Efforts were even made to poison the good relations between India and Nepal. After the election of Rajendra Prasad as President, Nehru announced his intention of resigning the office of Prime Minister and devote himself to party activities. The Central Cabinet was reconstituted and CR entered it. There were several exchanges of correspondence between Nehru and Patel on matters of principle, including a definition of the powers of a governor. Finance Minister John Matthai resigned on an issue of principle, and this was followed by a bitter war of words.

In the Congress presidential elections, Nehru and Patel ranged on different sides. Nehru opposed Purushottamdas Tandon's nomination, and when Tandon was elected Nehru refused to join the Congress Working Committee. The Sardar's health began to fail.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AICC	All-India Congress Committee, general body invested with final authority in matters of party organisation and working; generally elected by party members every year
API	Associated Press of India, domestic news agency owned by Reuter; converted to Press Trust of India after independence
BPCC	Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee
CP	Central Provinces
CR	C. Rajagopalachari
CWC	Congress Working Committee, chief executive body of Congress formed by party President after his election; responsible to AICC, now partly elected and partly nominated
DCC	District Congress Committee
INA	Indian National Army or Azad Hind Fauj, formed of Indian military personnel by Subhas Chandra Bose in Burma after fall of South-East Asia to Japanese in second half of World War II
KPCC	Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee
MPCC	Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
PCC	Pradesh Congress Committee
UP	United Provinces
UPPCC	United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee
WC	Working Committee (of Congress)

GLOSSARY OF INDIAN TERMS

<i>Akhras</i>	Members of militant Muslim political and religious organisation founded in 1928
<i>Akalis</i>	Sikh devotees of cult founded by Guru Govind Singh (died 1708); now a politico-religious party of Sikhs
<i>Allah</i>	God
<i>Allama</i>	A learned Muslim, a divine
<i>Amils</i>	Term used for educated Sindhis who take to professions and government service
<i>Ashram</i>	Hermitage
<i>Ashirvad</i>	Blessings
<i>Babu</i>	Properly a title of respect attached to a name as Mr or Esq, now generally used to signify a clerk
<i>Bapu</i>	Affectionate form of address for Gandhi used by followers; means father
<i>Bhai</i>	Brother
<i>Bhaiband</i>	Sindhi community whose members go out of India for trade and are generally affluent
<i>Coccani</i> (<i>Konkani</i>)	Those who live in Konkan region in West India
<i>Dakshina Bharat</i> <i>Hindi Prachar Sabha</i>	An association for the spread of Hindi language in South India
<i>Darshan</i>	Audience with person held in reverence
<i>Deccani</i>	Those who live in Deccan region
<i>Goondas</i>	Hooligans
<i>Harijan</i>	Children of God, a term coined by Gandhi for untouchables; also title of Gandhi's weekly newspaper
<i>Hindi Prachar Sabha</i>	An association for the spread of Hindi language
<i>Hindu Mahasabha</i>	Communal organisation whose membership was confined to Hindus

<i>Jai Hind</i>	Victory to India
<i>Jamiat-ul-Ulema</i>	Pro-Congress association of Muslim divines founded in 1919
<i>Khoja</i>	A Muslim sect in Western India engaged in trade and commerce
<i>Kisan</i>	Peasant
<i>Lakh</i>	One hundred thousand
<i>Lingayat group</i>	Influential caste in Maysore State
<i>Maharaj Kumar</i>	Prince, Hindu title for Maharaja's son
<i>Mahasabhaites</i>	Members of Hindu Mahasabha
<i>Mahatmaji</i>	Great Soul; generally used as term of respect for Gandhi
<i>Marwari</i>	Native of Marwar in Rajputana, often settled in other parts of India, a banker, broker or merchant
<i>Maulana</i>	Title of respect accorded to Muslim judges, heads of religious orders and persons of learning
<i>Non-Brahmins</i>	Those who belonged to castes other than Brahmins and objected to dominance of Brahmins in civil services and professions
<i>Panthic</i>	One devoted to Sikh faith
<i>Parsee</i>	Zoroastrian refugees who fled from Persia on its conquest by Muslims in 8th century AD; chiefly settled in Western India and distinguished originally as merchants, shipbuilders and traders
<i>Puja days</i>	Days on which special Hindu worship is held
<i>Rai Sahib</i>	Title of Rai Sahib was conferred by Viceroy in the name of British sovereign
<i>Sahib</i>	Master; respectful form of address
<i>Sikh</i>	Followers of Guru Nanak
<i>Sjt.</i>	Short for Shrijukta, meaning Mr
<i>'Unionists</i>	Members of Unionist Party of Punjab

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME II

Sardar Patel's rise to eminence as a national leader began with his appointment in April 1936 as Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Board to fight the elections under the Government of India Act of 1935. Until then he was known more as the hero of Bardoli and a silent lieutenant of Gandhi than as a political figure on the national plane.

The Government of India Act received royal assent on 2 August 1935. The new reforms, although far short of nationalist demands, offered substantial concessions in the provinces, so that the Congress decided at its 49th session at Lucknow on 12-14 April 1936 under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru to contest the elections to the provincial legislatures.

The new Congress Working Committee met at Wardha on 27-29 April and constituted a Parliamentary Board to organise the party's election campaign. This was a deliberate and calculated break with the former attitude of either boycotting legislatures or entering them to discredit them from within. It also marked the emergence of Jawaharlal Nehru as the star election campaigner of the Congress because of his popular image and of Sardar Patel as party manager with the requisite talent to select party candidates and organise and finance elections.

The All-India Muslim League too decided, under Jinnah's leadership, to fight the elections and use this opportunity to further the objective of complete home rule for India. The death of Sir Fazli Husain on 9 July 1936 and the virtual withdrawal of the late Aga Khan from the active leadership of the All-India Muslim Conference left Jinnah without a rival Muslim at the national level.

Elections with an electorate of over 35 million were held in January and February 1937. The Congress swept the poll in the non-Muslim constituencies and its ministries assumed power in Bihar, Bombay, the Central Provinces, Madras, Orissa and the United Provinces in July. Disappointed at his failure to get the Congress party to accommodate the Muslim League in its ministries in the UP and Bombay, Jinnah started a tirade against the Congress, calling its High Command the Grand Fascist Council.*

The Jinnah-Nehru correspondence in April 1938 to bridge the Congress-League differences served only to widen them. In

an attempt to retrieve the situation Subhas Bose, then Congress President, held talks with Jinnah in May 1938 for a settlement of the communal demands of the Muslims, but these too yielded no result. The British rulers subtly encouraged their Muslim supporters to join Jinnah to enable him to claim that the League should be recognised as the sole representative of the Muslims of India.

On 10 October 1938, the Sind Muslim League Conference urged that India be divided into two federations. The Congress Working Committee reacted sharply to this development in December and equated the Muslim League with the Hindu Mahasabha as a communal organisation. This caused Jinnah to attack the Congress as a Hindu body and threaten civil disobedience in protest against the alleged persecution of Muslims in the Congress-run provinces.

The year 1939 opened with the presentation by the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, of the draft instrument of accession with a view to bringing into operation the federal part of the Government of India Act of 1935. The Princes and their Ministers held a meeting in Bombay in June and pronounced the terms of the draft unacceptable.

The outbreak of the Second World War on 3 September 1939 transformed the political scene in India. The plan for federation was suspended and the Viceroy, by inviting Gandhi, Jinnah and the Nawab of Bhopal, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, for consultation on how to help the war effort, equated Jinnah with Gandhi for the first time. The Congress ministries resigned by the end of October because of the refusal of the British Government to include the independence of India among its war aims. Jinnah's followers observed the exit of Congress ministries as Deliverance Day. This development led to a closer understanding between the Viceroy and Jinnah.

The rival positions hardened when the Congress under the presidentship of Maulana Azad passed a resolution at its Ramgarh session on 19-20 March 1940 demanding complete independence and a constituent assembly. The Muslim League's rejoinder was delivered at its Lahore session, held on 22-24 March, urging the division of India into autonomous national states. With his clear insight Sardar Patel visualised another struggle and said in Ahmedabad on 8 April that the only question was when to start it. He was confirmed in this when Winston Churchill replaced Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister on 10 May 1940.

As the tide of war was going against Britain, the Viceroy shrewdly decided to talk with Jinnah on 27 June and with Gandhi two days later. The result was a statement by the Viceroy on 8 August placing in the hands of Jinnah a veto on constitutional progress by declaring that "the British Government could not contemplate the transfer of power to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a government."

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour, which brought the US into the war on the side of the Allies in December 1941, introduced a new factor in Indian politics because of the manner in which Japan subsequently overran vast areas of South-East Asia, including Burma, Malaya and Singapore. President Roosevelt's pressure made the British War Cabinet send Sir Stafford Cripps to India with proposals for a political settlement. The move failed and Cripps returned to London on 12 April 1942.

Two resourceful minds began a search for a way of breaking the deadlock in view of the probability of Japan occupying India. C. Rajagopalachari suggested that the Congress acknowledge the League's claim for separation, whereas Gandhi spelt out a Quit India programme, calling on Britons "to leave India to God, (and) if that is too much, then leave her to anarchy."

In July 1942 the Congress Working Committee gave Britain notice to quit and on 8 August the AICC endorsed the demand. The following day Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Azad and other members of the Congress Working Committee were arrested. This led to disturbances and acts of sabotage on a large scale. While Congressmen were in the wilderness, the Muslim League, aided by British officials, enlarged its influence and authority over the ministries formed in Muslim-majority provinces.

Lord Wavell succeeded Lord Linlithgow on 20 October 1943. This raised fresh hopes of resolving the deadlock. The new Viceroy created a good impression by stating in his first address to the Central Legislature on 17 February that he considered India a national unit. It was, of course, a military man's view, but it partly dissipated the suspicion that the British Government was wholly pro-League.

Gandhi was released on medical grounds on 6 May 1944. After a study of the situation and inspired by Rajagopalachari, he held talks and exchanged letters with Jinnah in September on

a political settlement, envisaging almost a confederal set-up. Since Jinnah believed that the British would as usual outbid Gandhi, these talks too proved abortive. The year 1945 opened with the move for a pact between Bhulabhai Desai and Liaquat Ali Khan, leaders of the Congress and League groups in the Central Legislature, to form a Congress-League coalition.

Although the move failed, it acted as a catalyst. The tide of war had turned by now against the Axis powers. Allied forces recaptured Rangoon on 3 May 1945 and Germany surrendered on 7 May. After visiting London, Lord Wavell released the Congress leaders and held a conference in Simla in June. This attempt at a settlement also failed. Meanwhile, Labour assumed power in Britain on 26 July and Jinnah, apprehending that it might take a pro-Congress stance, pressed for fresh elections in India.

Sir Stafford Cripps had attributed the failure of the Simla Conference, called by Lord Wavell in the summer of 1945 to break the political deadlock, to the anxiety of the contestants to avoid interim arrangements that might prejudice the basis of a permanent settlement on the transfer of power. Sir Stafford had suggested that new elections be held in India to form a constituent assembly. Wavell and the Attlee Cabinet fell in line with this view.

The Working Committee of the Muslim League, which had already urged fresh elections, supported the proposal enthusiastically. Jinnah felt that in the communally surcharged atmosphere of the time a fresh poll based on separate communal electorates would help him establish the representative character of the League as the sole spokesman of the Muslim "nation."

The Congress party, too, favoured fresh elections since that would help break the political stalemate and also enable it to increase its strength in the Central Assembly. The last elections to this body had been held in 1934, and those to the provincial legislatures in 1936. The life of these assemblies had been extended on the plea of preoccupation with the war effort. The truth, of course, was that the British authorities were afraid that fresh elections would only result in a further addition to the strength of the Congress party.

Elections were looked at by the rival political parties as a means of proving their hold on the masses, and by the bureaucracy in India as an instrument for hardening the divisive forces in the country. Only the Attlee Cabinet felt genuinely concerned about finding an agreed solution through democratic processes.

Japan surrendered on 14-15 August and Wavell announced on 21 August that general elections would be held the following winter.

In this volume, the Sardar Patel Correspondence picks up the thread at this point of development. As Chairman of the Central Election Board of the Congress, the Sardar sensed how fateful the elections would be in the context of the coming transfer of power.

The volume opens with a letter he wrote to Nehru on 1 October 1945 drawing attention to the Government of India's announcement of fresh elections to the Central and Provincial Assemblies and inviting Nehru to send him "a small draft of the election manifesto for the Central Assembly elections." He added: "I think it would do if you would base the manifesto on the main issue of independence or Quit India."

The question of a manifesto having been settled, the correspondence takes the lid off the process of selecting party candidates and financing elections. Sardar Patel was the kingpin of the organisation as Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. Maulana Azad, as Congress President, was Chairman of the Parliamentary Board. Jawaharlal Nehru kept himself aloof from the organisational part of the election campaign. But as a star campaigner he expressed himself occasionally on men and matters according to his own predilections.

There were two ways of dealing with the correspondence. One was to publish the letters in chronological sequence, leaving it to the reader to assess their significance and the role played by the numerous personalities that figure in it. The alternative was to help the reader to assess the role played by Sardar Patel and his principal colleagues by so arranging the correspondence as to focus attention on them and on their relationship.

The alternative has been adopted in arranging the volume. The letters exchanged between Patel and Azad from October 1945 to March 1946 have been brought together in chronological sequence. They throw light on the Sardar's relations with the Congress President. This correspondence is followed by that between the Sardar and the other members of the Congress Working Committee and the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. These focus attention on the manner in which other members of the Congress High Command functioned in their relationship, with Sardar Patel.

Then follows the voluminous correspondence between Patel and provincial party bosses. This concerns largely the selection

of candidates and the assessment of rival claims based on jail-going record and on caste and religious affiliations.

The arrangement involves moving forward and backward chronologically, but it is hoped that the reader will feel rewarded in that he will get an opportunity to grasp the significance of the fateful elections in terms both of personalities and the political scene preceding the transfer of power. The pattern that emerges from this exercise has both historical and topical interest.

The Muslim League fought the elections on the issue of Pakistan. The Congress reiterated its stand on independence, but its resolution passed in September 1945 did concede the right of secession. The rider it added to the resolution ran: "Nevertheless, the Committee declares also that it cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will. While recognising this principle, every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and cooperative national life. Acceptance of the principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within that area. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the union, consistently with a strong national state."

Congressmen had been in the wilderness during the war years and their party machine was in disarray. It became Patel's prime responsibility to reassemble the machine and get it to run smoothly. A blunder committed by the British Indian Army authorities helped create an emotional wave throughout the country which Congressmen could ride. This was the decision to try in Delhi's Red Fort three officers of the Indian National Army which Subhas Bose had organised in South-East Asia as the military arm of the Azad Hind Government set up in collaboration with the Japanese. About 20,000 INA men had been rounded up by the British after the war. Since the trial involved a Hindu, a Muslim and a Sikh, it assumed special significance as symbolising the unity of the three communities in the fight for liberation for which the INA stood in people's minds.

The fact that Nehru donned his barrister's gown after a quarter of a century to appear at the trial and that an elder statesman and top constitutional lawyer, Tej Bahadur Sapru, also joined in the defence made a nationwide impact. The daily proceedings and the brilliant advocacy of Bhulabhai Desai, Leader

of the Congress party in the Central Assembly, made such an appeal to the sentiments of the people that the Muslim League too felt impelled to express support for the defendants.

The correspondence lifts the veil over the exciting and occasionally exasperating drama of factional rivalry and the personal ambitions of men and women seeking the party ticket for election. It discloses how even the Congress High Command suffered from disharmony and yet managed to preserve its public image of single-minded unity. The key role in this drama was Patel's. His judgment proved generally sound and his integrity, patriotism and prestige acted as a magnet to attract funds to run the election machine.

From the day the Sardar opened his election office in Bombay in October 1945 with Shantilal Shah as its Secretary, his organisation functioned with efficiency and helped the party gather a rich harvest.

The sharp exchange of views between Patel and Azad on the selection of candidates, especially in the Punjab, Bengal and Sind, made Patel remark that the "selection of candidates is a bad business" and deplore the "mad race for power." Problems regarding the Muslim seats in UP and Bihar, the struggle in CP to keep Communists out of labour constituencies, the Rajaji-Kamaraj clashes in Tamil Nadu, and the rivalry for leadership of the Congress Legislature party in Madras Presidency, the Akali-Congress rivalry in the Punjab and the Oriya-Andhra differences in Orissa reflected in the correspondence constitute a lineal relevance to contemporary history.

The sprawling province of Madras proved a headache to the High Command. So far as election prospects were concerned, it was Congress-minded, but the party was in travail over its future leadership. Gandhi backed Rajagopalachari, and Patel and Azad brought the whole force of their influence to uphold their leader's judgment. But CR was attacked on one flank by Kamaraj and on the other by the Andhra Kesari, Prakasam. This was the first instance of successful defiance of the High Command.

The massive correspondence is studded with such comments as the following made by Patel in a letter to Kamaraj on 25 December 1945: "The Working Committee naturally is anxious to see that the atmosphere in the province is settled before the elections. But it is unfortunate that your attitude is not helpful

at all. Your telegram contains a veiled threat of indiscipline if not of revolt. There is no question of imposing any decisions from above but you and your colleagues must realise that the Working Committee has also a responsibility and it cannot abdicate its functions if it has been approached by as many as about one-third of the members of your Provincial Congress Committee."

Sardar Patel's confidence that the Congress would sweep the polls was based on his firm belief that "the country's atmosphere today is such that whoever is put up by the Congress on its ticket gets through without any difficulty."

In a letter to Azad he said that Nehru's tours "create a lot of enthusiasm and huge crowds gather together, but these demonstrations have no value for the purpose of election as they do not influence the voter in the Muslim constituencies. The Hindu voters need no encouragement."

A sharp rebuke is administered to a Congress leader in the Punjab. The Sardar wrote that "the Punjab is a prosperous province and a key province of Pakistan. It should not be difficult for the Congress to raise any amount of money for this all-important issue, which affects the Punjab most, but if in spite of this you and your colleagues feel that some help from outside is necessary I shall do my best to help you." He did, and the Punjab leader confessed: "As a Punjabi I am thoroughly ashamed of it."

Writing to V. V. Giri (now President of India) on 17 December 1945, the Sardar said: "Either capture AITUC (All-India Trade Union Congress) by peaceful and decent means or start a rival TU (trade union) Congress which would straightway be recognised by the Government and all pretensions of the representative character of the rival Communist organisation be destroyed."

Sardar Patel's letters are replete with exhortations, rebukes, dry humour and forthright assertion of the objectives of the Congress.

The following are extracts from letters to others:

"The intention of the Working Committee is to create the impression in the Indian defence forces that in free India they will not be treated as aliens or enemies but they will be given full opportunities to serve as patriots and prove their worth for the service of the country."

"I would advise you to keep your eyes and ears open but at the same time to keep your mouth shut."

"You need to have much stronger nerves than you seem to possess if you want to serve your country."

"A legislature is not the only place for service. Most of us of the Working Committee have never entered the portal of a legislative chamber."

"Why should people who make so many sacrifices in the struggle expect return for these sacrifices by way of compensation and claim to get to the councils? They render their sacrifices worthless and discredit the organisation. Instead of giving strength to the Congress, they try to weaken it."

"It is unfair to give no share to the tribals whose population is so big."

"There should be no quarrels or parties of factions amongst Congressmen in the Punjab, which is the key province and which holds the future of India in the balance. We must all unite and fight the forces of reaction and disintegration."

Writing to an ambitious political prisoner: "You are civilly dead, read in spare time literature and pass your time mostly in spinning and meditation."

After the elections, the race for ministership caused the Sardar to admonish some and rebuke others. Here are illustrative extracts from letters:

"No ministry can function unless the prime minister (now chief minister) is given full freedom to form a homogeneous cabinet of his own choice as there is joint responsibility in its working."

"The Congress thinks in term of nationalism and the cabinet members, though they may have been selected from any community, are expected to serve all the people of Orissa without any distinction."

To a retired military officer wanting ministership: "You must learn to suppress your ambition and to show your ability by doing some solid work as a soldier of the Congress instead of straightway attempting to become a leader."

"It would be impossible to compensate all those who have suffered in the cause of the Congress. The sacrifice itself is the greatest reward to those who have made it and you must not expect anything in return."

"An all-party government can never work."

"Throughout the Bombay Presidency not a single seat has been lost by the Congress. The Congress has captured the hearts of the people, but the candidates returned have to justify the confidence reposed in them by the people."

The elections to the Central Legislative Assembly, held in December 1945, resulted in an overwhelming success for the Congress in the general constituencies and for the Muslim League in the electorates reserved for that community. The Congress secured 91.3 per cent of the votes cast in non-Muslim constituencies and the League 86.6 per cent of those polled in the Muslim constituencies. The final results gave the Congress 57 seats against 36 in the previous Assembly and the Muslim League 30 against 25.

The correspondence throws much light on Congress efforts to put up or support nationalist candidates from the Muslim and other minority communities. While the elections established the Congress claim to be the biggest political party in the country, it also showed that the League, having captured all the Muslim seats in the Central Assembly, was a rival political force. The fact that nationalist Muslim candidates in many instances forfeited their security deposits reinforced the League's contention that the Congress did not enjoy the confidence of the Muslims.

Elections to the provincial legislatures were less disappointing from the Congress point of view in spite of the fact that they were staggered by the British bureaucrats in a manner that would help create a pro-League wave in the country. They were first held in Assam, Sind, NWFP and the Punjab. In Assam, the League captured all 27 Muslim seats and the Congress all 58 general seats. In Sind, the League captured 27 seats and the Congress 21. In NWFP, the Congress 30 and the League 17 seats. In the Punjab, the League got 75 seats and the Congress 51.

The position in the provinces, formerly ruled by Congress ministries and then under Governor's rule, was more satisfying to the Congress, which won 58 seats in Bihar, including one Muslim seat, against 34 captured by the League. The Congress got 152 seats in the United Provinces and the League 54. Their relative strength in the other provinces was: Bombay—Congress 126, League 30; Madras—Congress 165, League 29; Central Provinces—Congress 92, League 13; Orissa—Congress 47, League 4; Bengal—Congress 87, League 113.

The outcome of the elections to the provincial assemblies was not altogether to the League's liking, for although it won a majority of Muslim seats it could form ministries only in Bengal and Sind out of the five provinces it had named as the territory to constitute Pakistan. But the bureaucrats who favoured the partition of India helped Jinnah. They set about the task of neutralising the advantage the Congress and its allies had gained in the Punjab and NWFP. Their plot succeeded because the politicians were in a hurry to take over the reins of government which were slipping from the hands of the Raj.

This second volume is broadly divided into two parts covering the period October 1945 to March 1946. The earlier one deals with elections to the Central Legislative Assembly. The second part is a record of elections to provincial legislatures, whose significance was heightened by the fact that they would be electing members to the proposed Constituent Assembly.

Correspondence concerning the arrival of the Cabinet Mission in March 1946 and the negotiations that followed the elections to the Constituent Assembly and the formation of the Interim Government on 2 September 1946 and the crucial developments that preceded Lord Mountbatten's appointment as the last Viceroy are recorded in the third volume.

Two Viceregal announcements, one on 21 August 1945 and the other on 19 September, provide the background to the correspondence. These precede the letters, along with a statement by Sardar Patel on 28 August 1945 pressing for the release of political prisoners who were covered by the understanding on creating a proper atmosphere for fair elections.

Abbreviations and glossary precede the introduction. Lists of provinces under the Congress party constitution and of the members of the Congress Working Committee in 1945-46 are given in appendices. Brief footnotes are given to the serialised letters and telegrams to help identify individuals and institutions and explain events in the given context.

2, Tolstoy Lane
New Delhi-I

DURGA DAS

STATEMENTS BY WAVELL AND PATEL

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON ELECTIONS AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Following is a Press Note issued from the Viceroy's House, New Delhi, on 21 August 1945:

General elections for the Central and Provincial Legislatures are long overdue, and the Governor-General has decided after consultation with His Majesty's Government and the Provincial Governors that they must now be held as soon as possible.

The Central Assembly will, therefore, be left to expire on 1 October, and the general election for that chamber will be completed in time for the new members to take their seats at the budget session of 1946. The electoral rolls for the Council of State are not ready, and the life of that chamber will, therefore, be further extended to 1 May, 1946, with a view to the holding of a general election as soon as may be after that date.

In the circumstances, the Governor-General will not summon session of either of the two chambers this autumn.

Orders for the holding of general elections to the Provincial Assemblies will be issued in due course by the Governors.

FOLLOWING IS THE BROADCAST OF THE VICEROY, LORD WAVELL,
ON HIS RETURN FROM LONDON ON 19 SEPTEMBER 1945

After my recent discussions with His Majesty's Government in London, they have authorised me to make the following announcement:

As stated in the gracious speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament His Majesty's Government are determined to do their utmost to promote, in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, the early realisation of full self-government in India. During my visit to London, they have discussed with me the steps to be taken.

An announcement has already been made that elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures, so long postponed owing to the war, are to be held during the coming cold weather. Therefore, His Majesty's Government earnestly hope that ministerial responsibility will be accepted by political leaders in all provinces.

It is the intention of His Majesty's Government to convene, as soon as possible, a constitution-making body and as a preliminary step, they have authorised me to undertake, immediately after the elections, discussions with representatives of the legislative assemblies in the provinces, to ascertain whether the proposals contained in the 1942 declaration are acceptable or whether some alternative or modified scheme is preferable. Discussions will be undertaken with the representatives of the Indian states with a view to ascertaining in what way they can best take their part in the constitution-making body.

His Majesty's Government are proceeding to the consideration of the content of the treaty which will require to be concluded between Great Britain and India.

During these preparatory stages, the Government of India must be carried on and urgent economic and social problems must be dealt with. Furthermore, India has to play her full part in working out the new world order. His Majesty's Government have, therefore, further authorised me, as soon as the results of the provincial elections are published, to take steps to bring into being an executive council which will have the support of the main Indian parties.

That is the end of the announcement which His Majesty's Government have authorised me to make. It means a great deal. It means that His Majesty's Government are determined to go ahead with the task of bringing India to self-government at the earliest possible date. They have, as you can well imagine, a great number of most important and urgent problems on their hands; but despite all their preoccupations, they have taken time, almost in their first days of office, to give attention to the Indian problem, as one of the first and most important. That fact is a measure of the earnest resolve of His Majesty's Government to help India to achieve early self-government.

The task of making and implementing a new constitution for India is a complex one, which will require goodwill, co-operation and patience on the part of all concerned. We must first hold elections so that the will of the Indian electorate may be known. It is not possible to undertake any major alternative of the franchise system. This would delay matters for at least two years. But we are doing our best to revise the existing electoral rolls efficiently.

After the elections, I propose to hold discussions with the representatives of those elected and of the Indian states to

determine the form which the constitution-making body should take, its power and procedure. The draft declaration of 1942 proposed a method of setting up a constitution-making body, but His Majesty's Government recognise that, in view of the great issues involved and the delicacy of the minority problems, consultations with the peoples' representatives is necessary before the form of constitution-making body is finally determined.

The above procedure seems to His Majesty's Government and myself the best way open to us to give India the opportunity of deciding her destiny. We are well aware of the difficulties to be overcome, but are determined to overcome them. I can certainly assure you that the Government and all sections of the British people are anxious to help India, which has given us so much help in winning this war. I, for my part, will do my best, in the service of the people of India, to help arrive at their goal, and I firmly believe that it can be done.

It is now for Indians to show that they have the wisdom, faith and courage to determine in what way they can reconcile their differences and how their country can be governed by Indians for Indians. (The Indian Annual Register, July-December 1945, Vol II, pp. 148-149.)

POLITICAL PRISONERS

SARDAR PATEL ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO
THE PRESS IN POONA ON 28 AUGUST 1945

There are still 400 prisoners confined in the Alipuram jail, Bellary district, sentenced to various terms of imprisonment during the August disturbances. Two who have been condemned to death in the Kulasekharapatnam salt raid case are kept in the district jail, Madura. Of the 400 political prisoners, 264 are long-term convicts, ranging from five years to over 20 years. Out of these 264, 253 are being treated as C class prisoners, while only 11 have been placed in B class. Eighteen of the C class long-term prisoners have been put by the convicting magistrates on exclusive millets (cholem) diet and 32 have been put on ragi diet, rice or wheat being absolutely denied to them while they have never been accustomed to this diet. These 50 long-term prisoners are thus denied even the scanty diet which C class prisoners have been ordinarily getting.

Of the long-term prisoners in C class 17 are life prisoners, sentenced to 20 years and also over 20 years, and 36 have been sentenced to 10 to 20 years and the rest have been sentenced to 5 to 10 years.

Of these long-term prisoners, as many as 218 belong to Tamil Nadu, and among the charges against them were the burning of the aerodrome in Coimbatore district, setting fire to a toddy shop, setting fire to the court house in Ramnad district, salt raid in Tirunelveli district, resulting in the murder of an officer, setting fire to the collectorate in Ramnad district, RMS mail case and mailbag dacoity and attempt to destroy a bridge.

The C class prisoners are suffering from very poor diet and scanty clothing, want of oil which is denied to them under an antediluvian jail manual, inadequate medical aid resulting in the illness of 100 prisoners and very bad sanitary conditions.

I send as it is the foregoing to the Press. It has been sent to me by Sjt M. Bhaktavatsalam, the convener of the Madras Legislature Congress Party. The treatment described therein, whether legal and authorised, can only be described as inhuman and barbarous. If it is legal and authorised it condemns the whole administration as unfit and makes the condemnation all the worse. I hope that the Madras Government will publish their explanation and make reparation if they are guilty of the inhumanities described in the statement. I think too that all prisoners should either be discharged or an impartial and non-official tribunal should be set up to examine the cases and report upon them. Many convictions were secured during those days of unpardonable heat by or on behalf of the Government. They will not bear the light of calm reason.

SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE

CHAPTER I
CONGRESS AND ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

1

Nature Cure Clinic
6 Todliwala Road
Poona
1 October 1945

My dear Jawaharlal,

The Central Assembly elections programme has been announced by the Government of India. The elections in all the provinces will take place in November and the nominations are to be filled in the last week of this month as per today's announcement in the Press. I have already issued a circular letter asking for nomination from various provinces. I am also circulating a pledge required to be signed by the candidates. It would be better if you would send me a small draft of the election manifesto for the Central Assembly elections. I think it would do if you would base the manifesto on the main issue of independence or Quit India.

The Bombay riots are still flourishing. For the five years during the period of the war no communal riots occurred anywhere in India because the Government did not want it and the so-called disturbances in the August movement were suppressed with a very heavy hand. But they are evidently playing with the communal trouble in Bombay as it suits their purpose.

Bapu¹ has no fever now and he is improving steadily. I am still a no-changer² but I hope there will be some improvement during this month and if there is none during this month I will have to leave this place.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Allahabad

¹ Affectionate form of address for Gandhi used by followers; means father

² Sardar Patel was ill at this time and he has used this word as a pun to indicate that there was no improvement in his health. In the political parlance of earlier days of 1922-1923 a no-changer meant a Congressman who continued to support the party's then policy of non-co-operation including boycott of government schools, law courts and legislatures

Lucknow
5 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just received your letter of 1 October. I shall try to send you a draft manifesto for the Central elections but I am very full of work and activities here and I cannot find the time to develop a writing mood.

I have just received a letter from Raghunandan Saran¹ in which he mentions that K. T. Shah² is very anxious to be returned to the Central Assembly as a Congress candidate from one of the Bombay city constituencies, preferably the one represented now by some Parsi³. Shah did not speak to me about it. I should imagine that he would prove a useful member of the Assembly. I do not know who the candidates are, and anyhow it is for you to judge.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
1 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a note sent to me by Dharam Yash Dev⁴ whom perhaps you know. He was for a time employed in the AICC⁵ office

¹ Congress leader of Delhi

² Leading economist of Bombay; member of Zakir Husain Committee to prepare school syllabus on Wardha scheme lines; became Congress member of Constituent Assembly, 1946

³ Zoroastrian refugees who fled from Persia on its conquest by Muslims in 8th century AD; chiefly settled in Western India and distinguished originally as merchants, shipbuilders and traders

⁴ Journalist of Punjab who settled in Delhi after partition

⁵ All-India Congress Committee, the general body invested with final authority in matters of party organisation and its working; generally elected by party members every year

overseas department. He did some good work there but did not behave well and had to leave. Since then he has been very repentant and is anxious to do some national work. In an American sense he is fairly competent at his job though how far that will fit him into Indian conditions is more difficult to say. He is particularly good at publicity. I believe he is at present employed on a big salary by [Seth Ram Krishna] Dalmia¹ in Delhi. He offered to do work for us by leaving Dalmia or by remaining there and doing our work in his spare time. Whether he can be usefully employed by us, especially for election work, it is for you to judge. He is certainly earnest about it and will try to do his best.

You would have noticed in the Press a totally unnecessary controversy between Sarat [Chandra] Bose² and me. I am afraid Sarat has for some reason or other got a grievance against me, though why it should persist I do not know. He is making a dead set against Chiang Kai-shek, which seems to me bad and harmful and likely to create unnecessary trouble all round. None of us admires all that Chiang Kai-shek has done. But it does seem to me wrong for us to attack him in this way. He happens to be the head of the Chinese State and so far as India is concerned his attitude has always been very friendly. For my part I have kept up friendly relations not only with Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Government but with many of his critics in China. I do not want this controversy with Sarat, but to remain silent became impossible for me.

I am going to Lucknow on the 3rd for our provincial Congress meetings which will keep me there for 5 days. From 12 to 17 October I tour some districts in the UP [United Provinces] - Ballia, Ghazipur, Azamgarh, Jaunpore, Benares [now Varanasi] which suffered most during the past three years. I come back on the 17th and on the 18th I leave for Delhi, spending a day there in connection with INA³ work and proceed to Jaipur for three days. I expect to return to Allahabad on the 25th. I have to be in Bombay on 6 November for the National Planning Committee. Before I go there I should like to pay a brief visit to Calcutta and Midnapore if I can manage it.

¹ Marwari business man

² Leading Congressman of Bengal, elder brother of Subhas Chandra Bose, Member, Interim Government

³ Indian National Army or Azad Hind Fauj; formed of Indian military personnel by Subhas Chandra Bose in Burma after fall of South-East Asia to Japanese in World War II

I hope Bapu and you are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

4

Poona
6 October 1945

My dear Jawaharlal,

I received your letter of the 1st instant yesterday afternoon.

Mr. Dharam Yash Dev had written to Bapu and to [Rajkumari] Amrit Kaur¹ about the same matter, and as those letters were referred to me for disposal I had asked him to meet me in Bombay. He met me when we were in Bombay and he impressed me very well indeed. But from his conversation with me I gathered that he has a family and a style of living which is expensive. The ordinary Congress salary will not in my opinion suit him at all. He draws about Rs. 1,250 from Dalmia and his father has left him practically nothing. He has therefore to earn his own living. I learn from Amrit Kaur, who knows him intimately, that his wife is a society girl of expensive habits and she would not like that he should join the Congress office. But she has a very good opinion of him. He has been in correspondence with me, but I am not sure whether his style of propaganda would suit us in the election campaign. I agree with you that he has made ample amends for his past mistake and he has also made up with [Acharya J. B.] Kripalani.² At present we are confining ourselves to Central Assembly elections propaganda and for that we need not go in for any elaborate plan. But we shall consider when we meet next whether we should employ him for election propaganda in connection with the provincial assembly elections.

¹ Came to prominence as personal assistant to Mahatma Gandhi; this association earned her membership of Interim Government and health ministership in Nehru Cabinet as representative of Christian community; took keen interest in bringing to fruition Institute of Indian Medicine in New Delhi; helped create National Sports Clubs all over India

² One of the oldest living Congress leaders; joined Gandhi in 1917; General Secretary of Congress, 1934-46; its President, 1946-47; Congress member of CA, 1946-50; resigned from Congress in 1951; MP intermittently since 1952; exponent of Gandhian philosophy

You must have received my letter suggesting that you should draft a small election manifesto for the Central Assembly. We have not much time as these elections are to take place next month.

The unfortunate and unnecessary controversy between you and Sarat Bose distressed us here very much. Bapu has written to Sarat about it. He has probably written to you also. I fail to understand why he chose to make such a public attack against Chiang Kai-shek without having any consultation with you or Bapu. He knows the Congress policy. He must have some purpose behind it. I do not know what grievance he could have against you. I am afraid his re-entry into the Congress will create once again a situation which may not be pleasant for us all. Bapu is going to Bengal in the beginning of next month and he will probably talk to him more freely at that time.

I see that P. C. Joshi¹ has started vigorous propaganda against the Congress for our attitude towards his group. It would have been better if we had expelled them straightaway. Our notice has given him a handle to create propaganda here and abroad against us.

The Maharajkumar of Vizianagram² had written a letter to Amrit Kaur expressing a desire to stand for the Central Assembly. She has advised him to see you and Pantji [G. B. Pant] in the matter.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Allahabad

5

Allahabad
9 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just received your letter of 6 October. I am sorry for the delay in sending the election manifesto for the Central Assembly. I could not possibly find time in Lucknow. I hope to send you something tomorrow.

¹ General Secretary, Communist Party of India, 1934-47

² Cricketer and patron of Indian sport; Minister of Justice, UP Government, for some time; elected to UP Upper House, 1952

I quite agree with you as to Dharam Yash Dev.

I am really at a loss to understand why Sarat Bose suddenly launched an attack on me unless this is due to some old grievance which I have forgotten. It seems obvious to me that his anger is directed more against me than Chiang Kai-shek.

You may have seen in the papers the invitation issued by Dr. Soekarno, the President of the provisional Indonesian Republic. Among others, this has been issued to me to visit Java immediately to see things there. The situation there is odd and rather critical. It will have its repercussion elsewhere. I felt that some immediate response was desirable, and so I replied that if there is need for me there in the interest of Indonesian freedom I shall come there, even though this means leaving urgent and important work here. Of course this depends on passport and travelling facilities. By air Batavia can be reached in two days from Allahabad. There is hardly any chance of my getting these facilities from Government here. Nevertheless I am applying for them.

There is just a chance of my going to Calcutta and Midnapore towards the end of this month for four days or so. Someone told me that you might be there then with Bapu.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

6

Allahabad
10 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

As promised in my yesterday's letter, I am sending you a draft manifesto for the Central Assembly elections. This has turned out longer than I intended and it covers considerable ground, although I have avoided detail and the more controversial topics. I felt that it would be desirable to cover this ground for two reasons: 1. The manifesto is bound to attract attention in foreign countries and the avoidance of all other issues, apart from independence, will create a bad impression. People may say, as they have sometimes said in the past, that the Congress represents big business etc.

2. This will contrast well with any manifesto that the Muslim League will issue, for it is certain that they will avoid mentioning any of the country's problems and will harp on Pakistan. Of course, it is quite possible that they will not issue any manifesto at all.

I would suggest that when you issue the manifesto you might say something to the following effect: "In accordance with the directions contained in Resolution VII of the AICC held in Bombay the Working Committee is issuing this manifesto for the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly. A more detailed manifesto will be issued later, after approval by the AICC at its next meeting, for the provincial elections."

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

PS.

Another copy of this letter and manifesto is being sent express delivery.

ENCLOSURE

DRAFT MANIFESTO FOR CENTRAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

For sixty years the National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India. During this long span of years its history has been the history of the Indian people, straining at the leash that has held them in bondage, ever trying to break the chains of subjection and alien rule. From small beginnings it has progressively grown and spread in this vast country, carrying the message of freedom to the masses of our people in the towns as well as the remotest villages. From these masses it has gained power and strength and developed into a mighty organization, the living and vibrant symbol of India's will to freedom and independence. From generation to generation it has dedicated itself to this sacred cause, and in its name and under its banner innumerable countrymen and countrywomen of ours have laid down their lives and undergone life-long suffering in order to redeem the pledge they had taken. By service and sacrifice it has enshrined itself in the hearts of our people; by its refusal to submit to any dishonour to our nation it has built up a powerful movement of resistance to foreign imperialist rule.

The career of the Congress has been one of both constructive effort for the good of the people and of unceasing struggle to gain freedom. In this struggle it has faced numerous crises and come repeatedly into direct conflict

with the armed might of a great Empire. Following peaceful methods, it has not only survived these conflicts but has gained new strength from them. After the recent three years of an unprecedented mass upheaval and its cruel and ruthless suppression, involving terrible suffering for our people, the Congress has risen again stronger than ever and more loved by the people by whom it has stood through storm and stress.

The Congress has stood for the independence of India and for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups in India and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for the right of the Indian people as a whole to have full opportunities for growth and self-development according to their own wishes and the genius of the nation; it has stood also for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework. For those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice, it has stood for the removal of all barriers to equality, and special help from the State and society in order to raise them from their backward and depressed state.

The Congress has envisaged a free, democratic State with the fundamental rights and civil liberties of all its citizens guaranteed in the Constitution. This Constitution, in its view, should be a federal one with a great deal of autonomy for its constituent units, and its legislative organs elected under adult franchise. In regard to the franchise, as other matters, sex should be no bar, and women should take full part as citizens in national activities.

A hundred and fifty years and more of foreign rule have arrested the growth of the country and produced numerous vital problems that demand immediate solution. Intensive exploitation of the country and the people during this period has reduced the masses to the depths of misery, starvation and beggary. The country has not only been politically kept under subjection and humiliated, but has also suffered economic, social, cultural and spiritual degradation. During the years of war, and even now, this process of exploitation by irresponsible authority and complete ignoring of Indian interests and views has reached a new height of incompetence in the administration, leading to terrible famine and widespread misery among our people. There is no way to solve any of these urgent problems except through freedom and independence. But the content of political freedom must be economic and social freedom also.

The most vital and urgent of India's problems is how to remove the curse of poverty and raise the standards of the masses. It is to the well-being and progress of these masses that the Congress has directed its special attention and its constructive activities. It is by their well-being and advancement that it has judged every proposal and every change, and it has declared that anything that comes in the way of the good of the masses

of our country must be removed. Industry and agriculture, the social services and public utilities must be encouraged, modernised and rapidly extended in order to add to the wealth of the country and give it the capacity for self-growth, without dependence on others. But all this must be done with the primary objects and paramount duty of benefiting the masses of our people and raising their economic, cultural and spiritual level, removing unemployment, and adding to the dignity of the individual. For this purpose it will be necessary to plan and co-ordinate social advance in all its many fields, to prevent the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of individuals and groups, to prevent vested interests inimical to society from growing, and to have social control of the mineral resources, means of transport and the principal methods of production and distribution, as well as of banking and exchange. Co-operation should be encouraged in land, industry and in other departments of national activity so that free India may develop into a co-operative commonwealth.

In international affairs the Congress stands for the establishment of a world federation of free nations. Till such time as such a federation takes shape, India must develop friendly relations with all nations and particularly with her neighbours on the east and the west and the north. In the Far East, in South-East Asia and in Western Asia, India has had trade and cultural relations for thousands of years and it is inevitable that with freedom she should renew and develop these relations. Reasons of security and future trends of trade also demand these closer contacts with these regions. India, which has conducted her own struggle for freedom on a non-violent basis, will always throw her weight on the side of world peace and co-operation. She will also champion the freedom of all other subject nations and peoples, for only on the basis of this freedom and the elimination of imperialism everywhere can world peace be established.

On the 8th of August 1942 the All-India Congress Committee passed a resolution, since then famous in India's story, and in this resolution it gave the battle-cry 'Quit India'. By that demand and challenge the Congress stands today and it has reaffirmed the national and international objectives of that August resolution. It is on the basis of this resolution and with this battle-cry that the Congress faces the elections for the Central and Provincial Assemblies.

The Central Legislative Assembly is a body with no power or authority and is practically an advisory body whose advice has been constantly flouted and ignored. It is completely out of date and is based on a very restricted franchise. The electoral registers for it are full of errors and omissions and no opportunities for correcting or adding to them have been given. Large numbers of our countrymen are still in prison and many others who have been released are disqualified from standing for election. Obstructions in the way of holding public meetings still continue in many places. Yet, with

all these and other handicaps and drawbacks, the Congress has decided to contest the elections on the issue of independence and 'Quit India'. In this election petty issues do not count, nor do individuals, nor sectarian cries—only one thing counts: the freedom and independence of our motherland, from which all other freedoms will flow to our people.

So the Congress appeals to the voters for the Central Assembly all over the country to support the Congress candidates in every way at the forthcoming elections, and to stand by the Congress at this critical juncture, which is so pregnant with future possibilities. Many a time the people of India have taken the pledge of independence; that pledge has yet to be redeemed, and the well-beloved cause for which it stands and which has summoned us so often, still beckons to us. But the time is coming when we shall redeem it in full, not by the election but by what comes after it. Meanwhile, this election is a small test for us, a preparation for the greater things to come. Let all those who care and long for freedom and the independence of India meet this test with strength and confidence, and march together to the free India of our dreams.

10 October 1945

7

Allahabad
10 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have sent you today a draft manifesto. I think a sentence might be added to this: on page 1, 3rd paragraph—after 'framework' have a comma and add: 'and for this purpose such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis.'

This meets the demand for linguistic provinces like Andhra, Karnatak, etc. without going into details.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Poona

12 October 1945

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have received your letters of the 9th and 10th inst.

I had seen in the papers the invitation of Dr. Soekarno, the President of the provisional Indonesian Republic, and your reply to it. Your response was certainly very good and if you get facilities it would indeed be very desirable that you should go there leaving all your important engagements here. It would do a lot of good to the many millions of our countrymen spread over in various parts of East Asia, apart from the good that it would do to the general cause of freedom of all Asian races. But I have no hopes of your getting either the passport or the travelling facilities. I am glad you have applied for them.

I see that you propose to go to Calcutta and Midnapore towards the end of this month. Bapu will not be there so soon, but so far as I am concerned I am not in a fit state yet to travel so far. I am anxious to leave this place as soon as possible to get on with the work that has been entrusted to me by the Election Board. Of course I am doing as much as is possible from here but the real work can be done from Bombay only.

Rajen Babu¹ had written to me also about his meeting with Syama Prasad [Mookerjee]². I had also written to him that the Congress cannot think of any settlement with the Hindu Mahasabha.³ Besides, there is absolutely no need as the Congress will easily secure all the seats in the Central Assembly so far as non-Muslim constituencies are concerned, except perhaps Dr. Syama Prasad's own seat, which by courtesy the Bengal Congress

¹ Dr. Rajendra Prasad; Congress leader from Bihar; close associate of Gandhi; lawyer of Patna High Court when he joined Gandhi's satyagraha against British indigo planters in Champaran district, Bihar, 1917; twice President of Indian National Congress; Minister for Food and Agriculture, Interim Government, and in first Nehru Government after Independence; Chairman, Indian Constituent Assembly; first President of Indian Republic, 1950-62

² Educationist-politician; Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, 1934-38; Finance Minister, Bengal, 1941-42; member, CA, and Minister in first Nehru Cabinet; President, Hindu Mahasabha, and later founder of Jan Sangh

³ Communal organisation whose membership was confined to Hindus

Committee may think it proper to allow without contest. There is no other place where we can allow any one else to get in. The other suggestions made by Syama Prasad to Rajen Babu are wholly irrelevant and premature. I have written to him strongly about it.

I thank you very much for the draft manifesto which you have sent to me and for the trouble you have taken to find time for it in the midst of your engagements. I will go through it and show it to Bapu before writing to you further about it.

I understand that you are going to Jaipur during the course of the third week of this month. Mr. Haribhau Upadhyaya¹ writes to me that it would be helpful to him in Ajmer, where we have to put one candidate for the Central Assembly against a rich Marwari² who is a sitting member, if you can find a few hours to go there. He has, I understand, written to you also. In case you are not able to go I suggest that you request Mrs. [Sarojini]³ Naidu to go there for a day. Ajmer has come round and fallen in line with the country in the last struggle and it is possible that with a little encouragement from us it may also come up with the rest of the provinces in future.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Allahabad

Poona
15 October 1945

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have received your letter of the 10th instant suggesting a small addition in the draft manifesto which you have been good enough to send and we have incorporated it in the proper place.

¹ Congress worker of Ajmer and writer of Hindi prose; became Chief Minister of Ajmer and later Minister in Rajasthan Cabinet after Independence

² Native of Marwar in Rajputana; often settled in other parts of India and followed business of banker, broker or merchant

³ Poet-politician; most prominent woman member of Congress party; for years its office-bearer, becoming its President in 1925; last office held governorship of UP

I have also received your programme along with your letter. Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Allahabad

10

Allahabad
16 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of the 12th. I returned yesterday from my visit to Ballia etc. very tired. On the 18th I am off again. I sha'll be visiting Ajmer from Jaipur.

Prafulla Babu¹ has telegraphed to me to postpone my visit to Calcutta. So this is not fixed yet. I still want to go there, especially to Midnapore, if Prafulla Babu agrees. He wants me to go on a longer visit later. But no one knows what will happen later.

The Indonesian struggle is becoming more intense and critical and I feel that we ought to give it greater prominence. It would be a good thing if there were meetings etc. But the most dramatic thing would be for our dock workers and seamen to refuse to load war material for Java, as the Australians did.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

11

Poona
1 October 1945

My dear Shantilal,

You must have opened the office² today in Bombay. I have already announced in the Press about your appointment as office secretary.

¹ Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh: joined Congress, 1921; Chief Minister of West Bengal after independence; member, State Assembly, 1947-62; 1967-68; a constructive worker of Gandhian programme

² The office of the Central Election Board was opened in Bombay in pursuance of the decision of the Congress Working Committee to fight the 1945-46 election

I forgot to tell you that Sjt. J. B. Kripalani, the General Secretary, is also to be treated as one of the members of the Election Board and therefore all the circulars that may be issued from the office have to be forwarded to him also. That office has to be kept informed of the activities of our committee from time to time.

You must have already circulated copies of the pledge to be signed by the candidates in all the provinces.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Shantilal Shah
Office of the Congress Central
Election Committee
Congress House
Bombay

12

Congress House
Girgaum
Bombay 4
1 October 1945

Respected Sardar Sahib,

I saw Mr. [S. K.] Patil¹ at Congress House this morning and he is making the necessary arrangement for setting up the Bombay office. It will be located on the top floor of Congress House.

I enclose herewith copies of my letter to Maulana [Abul Kalam Azad] Sahib² and of the circulars sent out today.

Yours respectfully,
Shantilal H. Shah

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

¹ General Secretary of Bombay PCC for 17 years till 1946, when he became its President; member, Bombay Assembly, 1937-46; member, CA, 1947-48; M.P. 1952-67; Central Minister, 1957-63 and again 1964-67; member of AICC, 1933; Treasurer, 1960-64

² Leading Muslim divine; staunch nationalist from Khilafat days; Congress President, 1939-46; member, CA; Education Minister in Nehru Cabinet

ENCLOSURE
THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
THE CENTRAL ELECTION BOARD

Congress House
Girgaum
Bombay
1 October 1945

Respected Maulana Sahib,

I quote below a resolution passed by the Central Election Board at its meeting held on 19 September last:

"That a communication be addressed to Government urging that the procedure adopted in Bombay for the preparation of the electoral rolls be adopted uniformly in all the provinces for the Central as well as the provincial elections forthwith."

I have to request you that a communication in pursuance of the said resolution may be addressed to the Government, if not already sent.

Yours respectfully,
Shantilal Shah

13

Poona
3 October 1945

My dear Shantilal,

I have received your letter of the 1st instant and I am glad that you have opened the office and started the work. I am sending you copies of some further correspondence from here.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Shantilal Shah
Congress House
Bombay

Bombay
2 October 1945

Respected Sardar Sahib,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 1st instant yesterday. I have written today to Shri Kripalani, sending him copies of the minutes of the two meetings of the Board, also all the circulars issued up to now and of the pledge.

I will keep him informed of the activities of the committee.

The pledge has already been sent to all the provinces.

I have read the announcement about my appointment. I am going to Congress House daily.

The office has not yet been set up, but it will be done before Monday next.

I have engaged a clerk and I am purchasing the necessary stationery. The furniture will be purchased or taken on hire as Mr. Patil advises.

I have today secured two copies of the "Rules and Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Council of State," one from Mr. B. J. Desai¹, and another from Mr. K. M. Munshi².

I have written to the Manager of Publications for copies but I am informed that the same have not yet been received by the BPCC³ who asked for them long ago.

I am sending separately, by registered book-post, one copy of the "Rules and Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Council of State" and I am detaining another copy for my use.

¹ Bhulabhai J. Desai; leader of Congress party in Central Assembly; previously President, BPCC; Advocate-General (Bombay); known for Desai-Liaquat Pact, a compromise formula with Muslim League, and also for defence of three officers in INA trial by military court

² Started political career as joint editor of Young India, 1915; elected member of Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1927; AICC member, 1930-36; Home Minister (Bombay), 1937-39; member, CA, 1946-50; in between Agent-General, Government of India in Hyderabad, 1948; Central Food Minister; Governor of UP; Founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay

³ Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee

I am enclosing herewith copy of one more circular which I am sending today, and the letter which I have addressed to Sjt. Kripalani.

Yours sincerely,
Shantilal H. Shah

Vallabhbhai Patel

15

Poona
5 October 1945

My dear Shantilal,

I have received your letter of the 2nd instant and also the Gujarati letter of the 3rd.

Yesterday I wrote to [S. K.] Patil to ascertain from the voters' list the number of votes of the various communities roughly and to inform me as soon as possible. I have asked him to inform you about it also. We cannot fix up our choice of candidates without knowing these figures. You may also ascertain whether Sjt. Purushottamdas Tricumjee [Tricumdas]¹ is on the Central Assembly list.

If you are otherwise free you may come here for a day or a few hours with the lists available.

The book "Revised Rules and Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State" sent by you has been received.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Shantilal Shah
Bombay

¹ Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi, 1914; member, Congress Socialist Party, 1940-45; member, Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1949-52; later active member of PSP; member, International Commission of Jurists, 1955

Bombay
8 October 1945

Respected Sardar Sahib,

I have today sent to Shri Dahyabhai¹ a copy of the electoral rolls for the Central Assembly for Bombay city. I have also sent him two pads for your use.

I have not been able to work up the number of voters of the various communities on the Bombay rolls.

The suggestions for the candidates for the Central Assembly from the various provinces will begin to come in within a few days.

Under the resolution of the Election Board² dated the 25th ultimo, in the case of reports containing the name of one candidate only for a constituency and where there is no contest among Congressmen, you have the authority to approve the proposal.

In such a case I propose to forward to you the application, the pledge form and the report and a letter to be signed and sent by you in accompanying form.

In other cases the names are to be circulated with your recommendation among the members of the Board for their remarks. In such cases I will send you 7 copies of the applications, the pledges and reports together with letters in the accompanying form to be signed by you and sent to the members of the Board for their remarks.

I have spoken to Shri Mangaldas Pakvasa³ that he may again see Mr. Motilal Setalvad⁴ if he thinks proper.

I may state that the High Court will be closed for the vacation from 13 to 28 October and I will be able to come to Poona even on the week days if necessary.

¹ Son of Sardar Patel; member of Congress, 1924-56; member, Bombay PCC, 1946-56; first elected to Rajya Sabha, 1958; re-elected, 1964; now Swatantra Party leader in Rajya Sabha; business man by profession

² Small ad hoc body of Congress to supervise elections of party candidates and deal with relevant issues

³ President, Bombay Legislative Council from July 1937 to August 1947; Governor of MP and acting Governor of Bombay, 1954-55

⁴ Lawyer; India's delegate at several international conferences; former Attorney-General of India; Chairman, Law Commission, 1955

I enclose herewith copies of the two circulars which are being sent out today.

Yours respectfully,
Shantilal

PS.

Please return to me the forms of the two types of letters duly approved by you.

On Friday last, the 5th instant, I sent out reminders to all provincial Congress committees, except the North West Frontier Province and Bengal, for sending their proposals for candidates a fortnight before the date for nomination.

I have not written to the NWF Province and Bengal yet as the dates of nomination for them are 10 November and 3 November respectively.

Shantilal H. Shah

17

Poona
11 October 1945

My dear Shantilal,

I have received your letter of yesterday.

The Kerala report has already been circulated by me amongst the members of the committee as I had also received a report from the secretary of the KPCC¹ direct. I have written to him about the pledges.

Today's papers announce that the High Court has passed orders in favour of Shri Purushottamdas Tricumdas. I am glad that he has been released.

I am told that there is a special constituency known as the Gujarat and Deccan Sardars and Inamdars constituency for the Central Assembly and the Returning Officer for that constituency is the Commissioner of Central Division. Will you ascertain from the secretary whether there is any such constituency and whether the representation is by turn or whether it is one combined constituency? If it is by turn, which part of the province has got a right to send a representative this time? If you find that there is any such constituency, please secure the voters' list from the secretary and send it to me immediately, if

¹ Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee

possible with Mr. Patil who is coming tomorrow, or otherwise with somebody else.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Shantilal H. Shah
Bombay

18

Bombay
11 October 1945

Respected Sardar Sahib,

I enclose herewith copies of today's correspondence, received and sent out.

I have today handed over to Shri Dahyabhai the latest edition of the Legislative Assembly Electoral Rules and Regulations, which contains the electoral regulations of all the provinces. The book which I sent you a few days ago contained the electoral regulations relating to Bombay only.

I have also sent to Shri Dahyabhai "Council of State Electoral Rules and Regulations," and the correction slips.

Both these were received today from Delhi.

I have ordered out one more copy of each of these for being kept in the Bombay office.

I enclose herewith a form in which I propose to maintain the record about the Central as well as the provincial elections. If you approve of the form, I shall get the necessary copies made. If the form is to be filled up for all the seats of the Central as well as the Provincial Assembly, about 2,000 forms will have to be printed.

Yours respectfully,
Shantilal H. Shah

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Poona
15 October 1945

My dear Shantilal,

I have received your letters of the 11th and 13th along with the enclosures. I have also received the pledge form signed by Mr. Asaf Ali¹ in respect of his candidature and also the recommendation of the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee.

About the constituency of the Deccan Sardars² and Inamdars,³ I have got the list of voters. A large number of voters are from Maharashtra. Enquiries are being made by the Maharashtra Congress Committee as to the possibility of setting up a candidate from that constituency, but I do not think there is any chance, that constituency being of voters who are all reactionary and conservative.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Shantilal Shah
Bombay

PS.

I have kept a meeting of the Central Election Board on the 21st and you may come here on that day. We shall then settle the draft form which you have sent to me.

¹ Prominent Congressman of Delhi; Deputy leader, Congress party in Central Legislature, 1945; Minister of Transport in Interim Government; Ambassador to US and Governor of Orissa

² Landed aristocracy of Deccan region in Central India

³ Recipient of grant of land for loyal service

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TELEGRAM

Poona
15 October 1945

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Calcutta

CENTRAL ELECTION BOARD MEETING HERE SUNDAY TWENTYFIRST.
WILL SEND YOU FINAL REPORT.

VALLABHBHAI

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•
TELEGRAM

Poona
15 October 1945

- (1) Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
Masulipatam
- (2) Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
Nainital
- (3) Asaf Ali
Kuchachalan
Daryaganj
Delhi
- (4) Dr. Rajendraprasad
Patna
- (5) Kripalani
Allahabad

CENTRAL ELECTION BOARD MEETING HERE SUNDAY TWENTYFIRST
FOR FINAL SELECTION CANDIDATES. PLEASE ATTEND. YOUR ADVICE
ESSENTIAL.

VALLABHBHAI

Poona

15 October 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

The dates for the nomination of the Central Assembly members are drawing near but I have not yet received the proposals from the provinces except from Kerala, which I have circulated amongst the members of the committee. But no reply has yet been received from them. I am afraid the procedure of circulation is cumbrous and lengthy. In many cases there will be more candidates than one for a constituency and there will be disputes. If I have to depend upon the procedure of circulation and wait for the replies from members I am afraid it would not be possible to dispose of the applications in time, nor is it possible to call a meeting where all members can attend in such a short time. Almost all the nomination dates are fixed in the last week of this month. There is therefore hardly any time for a meeting. Under the circumstances I will have no alternative but to give a decision according to my own light in case the replies are not received in time from the members of the committee. I have however kept a meeting here on the 21st and if some members will come, it will be helpful.

There is no change in the state of my health as yet, but I propose to go to Bombay on the 25th for a week for the work which you and the committee have entrusted to me and I hope to finish it largely during the course of that week.

I have heard nothing about the Central Assembly proposals from Bengal except Press reports saying that Sarat Babu is contesting the Central Assembly elections. I do not know what has happened there. Please ask the president of the BPCC to expedite the matter and to send me the proposals.

There is some dispute about Surma Valley and I had received a complaint from the Assam Provincial Congress Committee. I advised them to obtain your decision in the matter. I have not yet received the proposals from Assam also.

I had received a letter from Dr. Rajendra Prasad suggesting some sort of a settlement proposed by Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee. He must have written to you also about it. I have opposed

the proposals very strongly and written to Dr. Rajendra Prasad that the Congress cannot afford to enter into any settlement with the Hindu Mahasabha, which has no chance of winning any seat anywhere in the whole country. It would compromise our position without any compensating advantage. I do not know what advice you have given to him.

Both of us are anxious about your health. Please keep us informed about the state of your health and your activities and also take care of yourself.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Calcutta

23

Calcutta
21 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thanks for your letter of 15 October. I have already sent a registered letter to you, which might have reached by now.

1. I could not go to Peshawar owing to indisposition, but Bhanju Ram Gandhi¹ and Abdul Qayyum², secretary, PCC, had come to Lahore and had a detailed talk with me. But the condition of the [NW] Frontier is unsatisfactory, and the Leaguers are putting in their full weight there. They are badly in need of money also. They should be helped immediately.

2. The Punjab and Bengal hold the key position in the present election. The result of the election will have far-reaching effects in future. The arrangement of the Punjab has been made to a certain extent and a board has been formed for the Muslim seats in Bengal. Both places need funds, specially Bengal, which will need the greatest amount.

I wanted to begin the election fund on my arrival here, but had to postpone it owing to Puja holidays. However, it will be begun in the first week of November, but the work should not stop on this account. A cheque of Rs. 20,000 was presented to me

¹ Congress MLA (NWFP) 1936; joined Cabinet as Finance Minister, September 1937; resigned in 1939; re-elected to Assembly, 1946

² Nationalist Muslim leader of NWFP; for some time Secretary of PCC and MLA; later defected to Muslim League

in Lahore. Though it was given to me, it was meant to be spent for the Punjab election. I wanted to send it to you, but now I have kept it back so that it might be utilised for urgent work here, if no other arrangement is made. Other arrangements would be possible in November only.

I hope Bengal will collect a good amount for election, but it will not be sufficient for the actual demands, and it would be necessary to get help from Bombay. The election campaign has to be carried on during this election in the Muslim majority provinces. We should spend the largest amount chiefly in these provinces.

3. Maula Bakhsh, Maulana Mohammad Sadiq and [R. K.] Sidhwa have written to me about Sind. A Muslim Nationalist Board has been formed there, and the conditions are hopeful, but it is necessary that they should also get monetary help.

4. Rafi [Ahmed] Kidwai¹ is doing the work in the U.P., who will write to you about his requirements in this connection. I do not know what has been done in Bihar by Rajendra Babu, but a fairly strong Nationalist Board has been formed there. It would achieve a good amount of success if it is duly helped.

5. Abdur Rahman is working for Kerala, I know nothing about the CP as yet. All my attention is centered on Muslim majority provinces.

6. Your reply to Rajendra Babu's letter is perfectly correct. All the workers of the U.P., and all the Congressmen of Bengal hold the same view. We should follow this line of action unflinchingly. I have taken full stock of every place—there is no chance for the Hindu Sabha in any province.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

24

Poona
16 October 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

The AICC by its resolution No. VII has given directions for preparing an election manifesto to be placed before the next

¹ Joined Congress during non-co-operation movement; member and whip of Swaraj party in Central Assembly, 1926-29; member, CWC, 1936; Minister in U.P., 1936-39 and 1946; member of CA and later Central Minister for Communication and Food

meeting of the AICC. But there is no possibility of the AICC meeting being held in the near future. I had therefore asked Jawaharlal to draft a manifesto for the Central Assembly elections. He has been good enough to prepare and has sent it to me. It has been corrected by Bapu and I have seen it also. I am herewith enclosing a copy of it [See enclosure with No. 6] for your approval which may please be communicated to me by wire. As soon as your reply is received I will get it printed and circulate it amongst the various provinces.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Calcutta

25

TELEGRAM

Calcutta
26 October 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Congress
Bombay

RECEIVED ELECTION MANIFESTO TODAY. I AGREE. PLEASE PUBLISH.
ABULKALAMAZAD

26

Calcutta
16 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I received your letter addressed to the Delhi address when I reached Lahore, but owing to pressure of work and indisposition I could not get time to look into the correspondence. The delay in reply could not be helped, which I hope you would not mind.

The day on which we had to meet in Bombay, I got ill, and diarrhoea began all of a sudden. Dr. Gilder¹ and Dr. Mehta had examined me. Next day I went to Delhi, but the ailment continued and is still persisting. The treatment is going on.

¹ Personal physician of Gandhi, Patel and other Congress leaders; later Health Minister in Bombay

Considering the present condition, the reorientation of the Congress committee in Lahore is quite satisfactory, and it is hoped that work will go on smoothly till the formation of the new committees.

I have sent a letter to Bapu in Hindustani, and have asked him to read out its contents to you also. I hope you have heard it, and would have formed an opinion in this respect.

So far as the candidates of the Punjab Central Assembly are concerned, the candidature of Mr. Brijlal Nehru¹ might be considered for the Lahore constituency. He is prepared to resign from Kashmir service.

Raizada Hansraj² was the member from Jullundur, probably he does not want to stand now. Kishori Lal Sethi³ wants to stand from that constituency. We have, however, to wait for the recommendation of the Punjab Provincial Committee.

So far as the Muslim seats are concerned, the success of the Ahrars⁴ and the Unionists⁵ seems to be certain. They may get two or three seats on the Congress ticket also. The Ahrars are, however, in great need of help.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

27

Poona
23 October 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I have received your letter of the 16th inst. and I see that you are still in very poor health.

Bapu had your Hindustani letter to him read out to me as also his letter to you.

¹ Former Auditor-General of Punjab and cousin of Jawaharlal Nehru; father of B. K. Nehru, Assam Governor

² Arya Samaj leader and senior Congressman of Punjab

³ Forest contractor of Kashmir; host of Gandhi and Nehru on their visits to Srinagar; member, Punjab Legislative Council after independence

⁴ Members of militant Muslim political and religious organisation founded in 1928

⁵ Members of Unionist Party of Punjab

I wrote to you that Mr. Brijlal Nehru had withdrawn his proposal. Raizada Hansraj does want to stand from Jullundur and his proposal has been recommended by the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee unanimously. I have sent all the proposals of the Punjab to you, but as they were not quite complete and time was very short I had wired to Maulana Daud Ghaznavi to come here, and he is arriving here this evening. I have consulted all the members by circular. I have also consulted Dr. Pattabhi and Shri Shankerrao Deo¹ who attended the meeting. The Punjab proposals will be disposed of tomorrow after consulting the president of the provincial [Congress Committee]. Diwan Chamanlal had also come here the day before yesterday. Tentative decisions have already been taken by the committee.

I am going to Bombay tomorrow and I had to dispose of the proposals so far received before leaving this place as there was pressure from all provinces for early disposal. Forty-three nominations have already been sanctioned and announced except from Bengal and Punjab and two seats from Madras. All others have been disposed of. The largest number of complaints were from Madras, but I had called the president of the Tamil Nad PCC and the secretaries of the Andhra and Kerala PCCs, and after consultation with them the Board unanimously disposed of ten seats. The remaining two will be disposed of on receiving further information which they will wire to me after necessary enquiries.

As for Bengal you and Prafulla [P. C. Ghosh] may dispose of the matter after consulting the local leaders and inform me of the action taken by you.

In the Punjab there are two Sikh seats of which one will be contested by Sardar Kapoor Singh on our behalf. He is a strong candidate and we will win. But the other seat for which Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar was proposed will be contested by Sardar Sampuran Singh on behalf of the Akalis² and we are sure to lose. The other two candidates proposed are stronger than Sardar Sardul Singh but even then they will not probably succeed. It is now proposed that Sardar Sant Singh³ who has subsequently applied and is a much stronger candidate and is sure to win should

¹ Congress leader from Maharashtra; joined non-co-operation movement in 1920; member, AICC and Working Committee of Congress; Chairman, Reception Committee, Faizpur Congress, 1936; member of CA from Bombay

² Sikh devotees of cult founded by Guru Govind Singh (died 1708); now members of a politico-religious party of Sikhs

³ Member of Central Assembly from Punjab with pro-Congress leanings

be set up for this constituency. This question will be decided tomorrow after consulting Maulana Ghaznavi.

Re. the three Hindu seats. About the one from Ambala Division in which Babu Thakurdas Bhargava and Lala Shamlal are rival candidates, we will select Babu Thakurdas who is strongly recommended by Mr. Asaf Ali and with which recommendation the Board has agreed. The other seat will be contested by Raizada Hansraj. The third is a difficult one and Maulana Ghaznavi had wired to me to persuade Diwan Chamanlal to stand. In case he declines I should keep the question open. Both Chamanlal and Maulana Ghaznavi will be consulted tomorrow and I will communicate the decision to you. After this consultation they will have to go back straight to Lahore tomorrow because the nomination date is very near.

This will dispose of all the Central Assembly selections, except Bengal.

I am going to Bombay for a week tomorrow afternoon and will write to you after my return from Bombay.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Calcutta

28

Calcutta
19 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

The following matters are to be taken into consideration in connection with the Central Assembly election:

1. Mr. Maula Bakhsh has sent a letter to me from Karachi, in which he wants to draw the attention of the Board to the candidature of Sri Krishna Lulla, who has already sent his application to the local election board. It is, however, not known with what remarks his application would be forwarded by the local board to the Central Board. Maula Bakhsh has sent a copy of Lulla's application to me, which I am sending to you. What I have to say to you in this respect is that Maula Bakhsh is very keen on this gentleman's nomination. He says that he was the right hand of his brother, and Nationalist Muslims of Sind would get ample support from him. He insists on his being adopted as a

Congress candidate. If there be nothing against this man, we should not turn down the request of Maula Bakhsh, as we depend wholly on Maula Bakhsh in Sind, and we have to deal with him during the election and after it.

2. Sham Lal is the sitting member from Karnal-Ambala, but another man wants to contest this seat. I have directed him to put his case before the Punjab Board first. I do not know who has been recommended from the Punjab now. The man who wants to contest the seat of Sham Lal is said to have thrice opposed the Congress candidates and has never taken part in the Congress movement.

3. I had called here the representatives of Assam and Surma Valley. Now all their differences have come to an end, and it has been agreed upon that the work will be done by a single joint board. The nominations of Surma Valley will, however, be made by the Bengal Board, because it is under Bengal's jurisdiction.

4. The Assam and Surma Valley board is demanding funds for the Muslim seats. It is necessary that our arrangements be completed in this respect as soon as possible.

5. A suitable arrangement [for] Muslim seats has already been made in the Punjab. I am doing the same for Bengal also, but as no arrangement has yet been possible for the election fund, all the work is at a standstill and very valuable time is being lost. Please let me know without delay what you have done in this respect. I have not been able to do anything here, as the people have either gone out for the Puja, or they are busy in its celebration.

6. Dr. [P. C.] Ghosh and Kiran Sankar Roy were carrying on conversation with Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose about the election board while I was not here. I also continued it. Now a small board comprising Sarat Chandra Bose, Dr. Ghosh and Ashrafuddin Chowdhry has been formed. A bigger board will be necessary for the provincial elections.

I have not yet recouped my health. It is rest which I need most, but I am not getting it anywhere. Kindly let me know the present state of your health. I hope you would recover complete health through the treatment at Poona.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

Calcutta
23 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thanks for your last letter. I agree with the list of candidates which you have sent to me. Only about Dr. G. V. Deshmukh, who is standing from the Bombay city, I have to make an inquiry. Is he the same Deshmukh who was the sitting member, and who had issued malicious statements against Mahatma Gandhi? Moreover he has been breaking party discipline so often. If he is the same man, I think it will greatly damage Congress prestige to give him the Congress ticket. It has been repeatedly affirmed that only those persons will be allowed to contest the elections this time on behalf of the Congress who have taken part in the Congress movement and have proved their worth at the time of test. I do not know how we shall be able to keep up to our standard if we approve such a man! I do not know what sacrifices he has made for the cause of the country.

It is quite possible that this is some other person. However, please let me know telegraphically about this matter.

I am receiving telegrams from the Punjab that the seat of Sham Lal, the sitting member, is being allotted to Thakurdas. The Central Board will have to intervene if the Punjab board has made such a recommendation. Sham Lal and his family have always suffered for the Congress. It would be unjust to remove such a tried man. Thakurdas has always opposed Congress candidates, and always kept away from imprisonment. There could be no reason to give preference to such a man over Sham Lal. Thakurdas is the brother of Lala Gopichand [Bhargava].¹ It should be brought home to Lala Gopichand that it is not proper for him for his own sake to get his brother's

¹ Congress worker of Punjab since 1919; elected to Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1937 and again in 1946; Prime Minister of Punjab, 1947-51

name adopted by the Congress. People have begun to say that he is using his influence unduly for his brother.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Poona

PS.

In the first instance, the Board was formed in Calcutta very late and the other difficulty is that Sarat Babu is in Shillong, from where he will come here on the 28th or 29th. The result is that no names have yet been finally settled. It is hoped that it will be done on 28th or 29th instant. As no time will be left to send them to Poona, I shall accept them on behalf of the Central Board.

Azad

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TELEGRAM

Calcutta
25 October 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Congress House
Bombay

WIRED YESTERDAY POONA ABOUT B. DAS [CUTTACK] APPEAL AGAINST REJECTION HIS NAME. PLEASE RECONSIDER. HE IS QUITE FIT FOR WORK.

ABULKALAMAZAD

31

26 October 1945

Dear Maulana Sahib,

I have received your letter of the 21st instant today. Your telegram about Mr. B. Das of Orissa was received late last night and I have replied as under:

'COMMITTEE REJECTED B. DAS FOR GOOD REASONS. CALLED FOR SUBSTITUTE WHOSE NAME ALREADY SANCTIONED AND COMMUNICATED. IMPOSSIBLE CHANGE NOW.'

Mr. [H. K.] Mahtab¹ had discussed this matter with me while he was at Poona and he himself was opposed to his nomination. Apart from his being physically not quite fit for being sent to the Central Assembly, there were other reasons also. Subsequently, no doubt, his name was recommended as no other candidate probably was available within the short period of the notice for application. But the committee at Poona considered the whole question carefully and wired to Shri Mahtab to send fresh proposals which were eventually received and sanctioned by the committee. The proposal was communicated to Shri Mahtab and also to the candidate. It was therefore impossible at this stage to make any changes as suggested in your telegram. Mr. B. Das was also informed about the decision of the committee.

About the Frontier I am arranging for help immediately.

In the Punjab, the Akalis are on the warpath. They have started violence in public meetings. The two candidates selected by us are fairly strong and the Akalis have lost their temper. Maulana Daud Ghaznavi and Diwan Chāmanlal had both come to me at Poona and we have fixed up the nominations in consultation with them. They have accompanied me to Bombay and both of them left yesterday for Lahore. Dr. Gopichand is here at my instance for securing financial assistance from here for the Punjab. He will be returning back after a couple of days.

The Bengal Central Assembly elections are a little later than in other provinces. I have not yet received the proposals from there. The provincial elections will, I believe, take place in February or March. But no programme has yet been announced. Sarat Babu is still at Kurseong. I believe he has written to you about his talks with the Muslim groups. But unfortunately you are not in a fit state of health. Unless you, Prafulla Babu, Sarat and the Muslim leaders meet and decide as to the whole plan of action in Bengal we cannot see our way clearly. You may also be able to ascertain roughly what should be the amount required for fighting the elections in Bengal. There should be no difficulty in raising the money required from Bengal, but even if there is any difficulty we can meet with it if we have some idea about your requirements there.

It is good that you have kept the cheque for Rs. 20,000 presented to you in the Punjab for the work to be done there at present.

¹ MLA (Bihar and Orissa) in 1924; President, Utkal P.C.C. 1930 and 1937; member, CWC, 1938-46; Chief Minister, Orissa, 1946-50; Central Government Minister, 1950-52; Governor of Bombay, 1955-56; Chief Minister of Orissa, 1957-60; member of CA from Orissa, 1946-50

Your telegram about selecting Shri Krishna Lulla from Sind for the Central Assembly at the suggestion of Maula Bakhsh was also received very late after the decision of the committee was communicated to the Sind Provincial Congress Committee. I have wired to Jairamdas [Doulatram]¹ if it is possible to readjust the matter in the light of your recommendation. But I fear they would not be able to do so at this late stage.

The Hindu Mahasabha has been creating unnecessary trouble by putting up candidates everywhere. In Bombay they have at the last moment put up two worthless candidates, the principal one of whom was defeated badly in a municipal by-election last year. But for this nominal opposition there would have been no contest in Bombay. But this will involve us expenditure for nothing.

In Gujarat so far as the Central Assembly is concerned, our candidates go unopposed. So in Mahakoshal. But in Maharashtra, the Hindu Mahasabha has been opposing us. Probably they will do so except in Gujarat and Mahakoshal.

I have also received a letter from Rajen Babu asking for financial help, and I am arranging to meet this demand immediately.

Arrangements are also being made for Assam. Prabhu Dayal came here yesterday as I had written to him from Poona. I have seen his requirements and there will be no difficulty about that province at all. I have advised him to contest all the Muslim seats. They had at first decided not to contest a large number of Muslim seats for fear of financial difficulties. But I have advised them as above and they have accepted my advice.

At present I am concentrating on my work here and later on when I am able to leave the clinic at Poona, I will go to some other places where it would be necessary for me to go for finishing my work.

In Delhi also I hear from Mr. Asaf Ali that the Hindu Mahasabha is putting up a candidate against him. I do not know whether this kind of opposition is intended to coerce us to enter into a settlement with them or whether there is any other object behind it.

What does the Hindu Mahasabha propose to do in Bengal about the Central Assembly seats?

¹ Member, AICC, 1917-41; MLC (Bombay), 1927-29; General Secretary, AICC, 1931-34; Member, Congress Working Committee; member, CA, 1946; Bihar Governor, 1947; later Union Food Minister and Governor, Assam

I hear reports that you intend to go according to medical advice for rest somewhere outside Bengal. Please let me know what is the truth about this matter.

Hoping you are doing well,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

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TELEGRAM

Calcutta
26 October 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Congress
Bombay

THAKURDAS BHARGAVA'S NOMINATION OBJECTIONABLE. HAS ALWAYS OPPOSED CONGRESS CANDIDATE. NEVER PARTICIPATED MOVEMENTS. NEVERTHELESS GOPICHAND'S BROTHER. I CANNOT AGREE SUCH NOMINATION.

ABULKALAMAZAD

33

TELEGRAM

MAULANA AZAD'S MESSAGE FOR SARDAR PATEL THROUGH API¹

Calcutta
28 October 1945

THE SITTING MEMBER FROM AMBALA-HISSAR IS A TRIED AND TRUSTED MAN OF THE CONGRESS. HE HIMSELF, ALONG WITH HIS SON AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, HAS CONSTANTLY BEEN GOING TO JAIL, AND HAS NEVER STAYED BACK IN ANY MOVEMENT. THAKURDAS HAS DONE NO SUCH SERVICE. HE OPPOSED CONGRESS CANDIDATES THRICE, AND ALWAYS KEPT HIMSELF ALOOF FROM IMPRISONMENT. NOTHING CAN BE SAID IN HIS FAVOUR FROM THE CONGRESS POINT OF VIEW EXCEPT THAT HE IS THE BROTHER OF LALA GOPICHAND. PERHAPS THESE FACTS WERE NOT BROUGHT TO YOUR NOTICE. KINDLY REVISE THE SELECTION OF THAKURDAS AND ANNOUNCE THE NAME OF SHAMLAL. SHAMLAL HAS APPEALED AGAINST THIS SELECTION. I AM AWAITING YOUR REPLY.

¹ Associated Press of India, domestic news agency owned by Reuter; converted into Press Trust of India after independence.

TELEGRAM

SARDAR PATEL'S MESSAGE FOR MAULANA AZAD THROUGH API

Bombay
29 October 1945

YOUR MESSAGE RECEIVED LATE LAST NIGHT. REGRET IMPOSSIBLE REVISE DECISION. FOUR MEMBERS OF CENTRAL BOARD OUT OF SEVEN VOTED FOR THAKURDAS. TWO ACQUIESCED IN THE DECISION. COMMITTEE CONSIDERED QUESTION THOROUGHLY. AWAITED YOUR REPLY TILL 22ND EVENTUALLY DECIDED AND DECISION WAS ANNOUNCED 24TH.

I HAVE NO AUTHORITY UPSET COMMITTEE'S DECISION NOW AS THAT WOULD TANTAMOUNT TO VOTE OF CENSURE AGAINST COMMITTEE AND WOULD RESULT IN SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS CENTRAL BOARD AS WELL AS LOCAL.

REGARDING YOUR TELEGRAM ABOUT SIND CANDIDATE JAIRAMDAS WIRES—MAN RECOMMENDED BY YOU COMES FOURTH IN ORDER OF MERIT OUT OF FOUR CANDIDATES AND LIKELY TO LOSE SEAT IF ACCEPTED.

Poona
6 November 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

On my return from Bombay on the 3rd evening, I learned from Bapu that you propose to call a meeting of the Working Committee at Calcutta on or about 16 December. A subsequent letter from Prafulla Babu indicates your intention to keep it in the last week of December. As it is, the middle of December will in itself be late, but the end of December will be too late. I expected that you will keep it in the first week of December when Bapu reaches there. You know we have promised a manifesto to the AICC for the provincial elections. The elections in some provinces will be in early January and we must be ready with the manifesto. It all depends upon your health, and if you

are going out for a change then it would not be possible to keep the meeting earlier.

About the Central Election Board, an early meeting is very necessary. We have to decide our attitude regarding the proposals for nominations for the provincial elections. In Sind they have already made some tentative proposals and I expect they will be submitting them to us shortly. These proposals will be of a very controversial nature and it would not be possible to dispose of them by correspondence. I, therefore, propose to call a meeting here on Friday, 16 November, and settle the question of policy to be adopted in the matter of these elections. As far as the Central Assembly was concerned, we had decided that the provinces should send their proposals with their report and the final selection was to be made by us. In several provinces the old committees are out of touch with the present-day atmosphere and they do not enjoy the confidence of the real workers of the Congress. If the selection is to be left to the provinces I am afraid there will be serious trouble and it will be difficult to impose discipline. If the final selections are to be made by the Board, we must send our instructions to the provinces as soon as possible and we must also decide about the procedure to be adopted by our Board in this behalf. Regarding the Central Assembly elections, we had very little time and therefore some of the complaints were received even after the nomination date was over. So far as the provinces are concerned such difficulty is likely to arise if we delay the decision regarding the procedure to be adopted in this matter.

I know that you would not be able to leave Calcutta or perhaps you will be going soon to some place for a change. Hence your coming to any place for the meeting is impossible. But if the rest of the members meet and discuss amongst themselves all the different points involved in the matter of selection of provincial nominations, it would be easy for the Board to make a report for your advice and opinion, and then we can come to some final decision. We may not take any decision in the Board till your approval is obtained, but the informal talks would be very helpful. If you suggest any other procedure I would unhesitatingly adopt it, but at present no other way occurs to me for the solution of this difficulty. I shall expect your reply whether the meeting should be called on the 16th or not by wire so that I can communicate with other members of the Board in time.

I have arranged to send a cheque of Rs. 25,000 from Bombay which you must have received by this time. Yesterday I received

Prafulla Babu's letter giving me an idea of your joint deliberations about the estimate which I had asked for. His letter indicates a huge sum. Indeed, for one province alone it is staggering, but I shall try to do my best and see that our cause does not suffer on that account.

Today Sarat Babu is coming in the afternoon and I propose to send this letter with him.

I am expecting to hear from you where and when you are going for a change and when you expect to return, so that in case of emergency I may possibly communicate with you through a messenger.

I hope you are taking care of your health. I am leaving this place for Bombay on the 19th. Bapu also goes on that day.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Calcutta

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Calcutta
6 November 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just received a cheque for Rs. 20,000 from Bombay. Please send me another cheque for Rs. 25,000 as soon as you receive this letter. I am leaving for Bindhachal tomorrow. Please send the cheque at the Bindhachal address.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

37

Poona
11 November 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I have received your letter of the 6th inst. today and I am issuing instructions for sending you another amount of Rs. 25,000 from Bombay as desired by you in your letter. Evidently you have

not received the letter I sent to you with Sarat Babu, probably because you had left Calcutta before he reached there.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

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TELEGRAM

Bindhachal
12 November 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

YOUR LETTER CALLING BOARD'S MEETING UNNECESSARY FOR DECIDING PROCEDURE. WE DECIDED AT POONA THAT CENTRAL BOARD WILL APPROVE PROVINCIAL CANDIDATES AND CONSULT PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIONS. INTEND CALLING WORKING COMMITTEE AND BOARD'S MEETING BETWEEN TENTH AND FIFTEENTH DECEMBER. PLEASE WIRE.

ABUL KALAM AZAD

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TELEGRAM

Poona
12 November 1945

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

YOUR WIRE. CERTAIN PROVINCIAL PROPOSALS SPECIALLY HIND UNITED PROVINCES ASSAM BIHAR REQUIRE IMMEDIATE SANCTION. PLEASE AUTHORISE OR SUGGEST ALTERNATIVE METHOD SPEEDY DISPOSAL. WE WOULD PREFER WORKING COMMITTEE [meeting] EARLY DECEMBER AS ALREADY TELEGRAPHED.

VALLABHBHAI

40

TELEGRAM

Poona

12 November 1945

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

IN VIEW URGENCY PREPARATION ELECTION MANIFESTO CONSIDERATION
OTHER IMPORTANT PROBLEMS SUGGEST WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING
CALCUTTA FIRST WEEK DECEMBER.

VALLABHBHAI
JAWAHARLAL

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TELEGRAM

Bindhachal

13 November 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

YOUR TELEGRAM. PREPARED CALLING BOARD AND CWC MEETINGS
FIFTH DECEMBER CALCUTTA.

ABULKALAMAZAD

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TELEGRAM

Poona

14 November 1945

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

YOUR WIRE THANKS. FIX MEETINGS FIFTH DECEMBER BUT SIND
NOMINATION DATE FIRST DECEMBER. SANCTION ONE CLEAR WEEK
BEFORE NOMINATION NECESSARY, SUGGEST SOLUTION.

VALLABHBHAI

Bindhachal
Mirzapore
13 November 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have come to Bindhachal, (District Mirzapore, UP), since 8 November. I could not get your letter in Calcutta because Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose reached there on the 9th. It was sent to me here through a messenger, thus there was a delay of three days in the transmission. I have sent to you my opinion by an express telegram immediately on receipt of the letter.

You must remember that we had decided in Poona and Bombay that the names of the candidates for the Provincial Assemblies should also come to the Centre for approval, as this cannot be left to the present committees. We had also decided that the provincial representatives might also be called, if need be, for the consultation of the Central Board before the final approval. It, therefore, seems to be unnecessary to call a meeting of the board to lay down the procedure. The procedure has already been settled, and the provinces are also not unaware of it. The only thing to be done now is that a date be fixed up to which time the recommendations of the provinces might reach the centre.

I agree with you that the meeting of the CWC¹ and the Board be called as soon as possible. I will fix it between 10 and 15 December. It will be held in Calcutta, as Bapu is going there.

Mathra Babu had come here with a letter from Rajendra Babu. Please send him a sum of Rs. 25,000 for the election fund. He is pressing hard for it.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

¹ Congress Working Committee, chief executive body of Congress formed by the party President after his election and responsible to the AICC; now partly elected and partly nominated

Poona
13 November 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I have received your letter of the 7th inst. along with the bills for Rs. 7,370/3/- today. I am issuing instructions for doing the needful in the matter.

We have sent you a telegram for fixing the meeting of the Working Committee early in the first week of December. In the meanwhile I received from you a reply to my letter which was sent to you through Sarat Babu. We considered the whole matter again and we came to the conclusion that an early meeting would be advisable. Another telegram was therefore sent to you. I am expecting your reply today. Jawaharlal has returned to Bombay.

This morning I got a telegram from Sarat Babu reading:

"MAULVI WALIUR RAHMAN CANDIDATE PRESIDENCY CUM BURDWAN AND MAULVI MOHIUDDIN KHAN CANDIDATE RAJSHAHI DIVISION MOHAMEDAN CONSTITUENCIES CENTRAL ASSEMBLY INFORMED ME AND PRESIDENT BPCC ON TENTH THAT THEY WOULD STAND ON CONGRESS TICKET AND NO OTHER TICKET. PLEASE APPROVE AND MAKE NECESSARY ANNOUNCEMENT.

SARAT BOSE"

It would be a good thing if we can get two members on the Congress ticket for the Central Assembly. So far we have got none.

Yesterday I had sent you a circular letter about the proposals of the Sind Provincial Congress Committee for the Provincial Assembly. Since then I have received some complaints about some of the proposals which will also be circulated today.

You must have seen from the Press that Mr. [Abdullah] Haroon,¹ the League candidate, is being opposed by Mr. Rashid Ali,² who has been expelled from the League. Haroon is a rich man and the contest is going to be very severe. Rashid Ali

¹ Leading merchant of Karachi and Congressman, 1920-28; parted company with Congress to advocate separation of Sind from Bombay Presidency and later supported Muslim League.

² Muslim Leaguer and man of letters and journalist, office-bearer of the Moslem Jumait, Karachi

needs financial help. Mr. Vazirani¹ recommends him and he has also written to me promising his support to us after the election. He needs a big amount.

Hope you are doing well and the change is doing you good.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

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TELEGRAM

Bindhachal
15 November 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

AS SIND ELECTIONS VERY NEAR HOLDING BOARD'S MEETING 24TH AND WORKING [Committee] 26TH ALLAHABAD. CALCUTTA CLIMATE VERY DETRIMENTAL MY HEALTH. IT WOULD GREATLY HELP IF WITHOUT RETURNING CALCUTTA I COULD DO IT. PLEASE CONSULT BAPU AND WIRE.

ABULKALAMAZAD

46

TELEGRAM

Poona
15 November 1945

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

THIS MONTH OTHER MEMBERS ENGAGED ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. DIFFICULT LEAVING THEIR PROVINCES. GANDHIJI'S PROGRAMME FIXED FOR SEVAGRAM TILL END MONTH. SUGGEST YOUR DISPOSING SIND PROPOSALS.

VALLABHBHAI

¹ Advocate of Karachi, Minister in Alla Bux Cabinet in Sind; independent in politics

Poona
15 November 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I have just received your telegram suggesting our meeting on the 24 at Allahabad. The members of our [Parliamentary] Board are all engaged in the Central Assembly elections in their respective provinces and they are not in a position to break their engagements or to leave their province. I have got letters from both Rajen Babu and Pantji in which the former says that his programme is fixed till 5 December for his tour in the province and the latter also till the end of this month. Shankarrao [Deo] also has his programme fixed till the end of this month in Maharashtra and Nagpur. Dr. Pattabhi also is busy with his election campaign as the Madras city election is on 1 December. It is therefore not possible for them to leave their provinces.

Bapu has fixed his programme for Sevagram where several meetings are kept during the last week of this month. Under the circumstances our meeting is out of the question in the course of this month. But we must dispose of the Sind proposals which are urgent. I had wired to Dr. Choithram [Gidwani] to come to Bombay as soon as possible after the 19th with all the proposals including the applications rejected by them as also the complaints and protests. It is my intention to send all materials with a report to you at Bindhachal.

Whether Dr. Choithram will come or not I do not know. I have wired to him yesterday but there is no reply. I would therefore suggest that you may dispose of the Sind proposals yourself in the manner you like, so that there may be no difficulty if we meet a little later.

The proposals for the Scheduled Castes from the UP have been approved by me in anticipation of sanction as their date of nomination was on the 10th. Most of these seats have been contested and others have filed their nominations.

The Assam Scheduled Castes' proposals have also been received and they are also such as would raise no controversy and the other members of the committee are hardly interested in it.

The Bihar Scheduled Castes' proposals are also expected tomorrow. They may also be disposed of in accordance with the recommendation of the province as they are hardly such as would interest any other member outside the province.

The proposals for the general constituencies from other provinces will probably come in the first week of December or even later. So, if the Sind proposals are disposed of there would be no urgency for our meeting. I have therefore sent the following telegram to you in consultation with Bapu:

THIS MONTH OTHER MEMBERS ENGAGED ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS DIFFICULT LEAVING THEIR PROVINCES. GANDHIJI'S PROGRAMME FIXED FOR SEVAGRAM TILL END MONTH. SUGGEST YOUR DISPOSING SIND PROPOSALS.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

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TELEGRAM

Poona
16 November 1945

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

SIND GOVERNMENT REVISED PROGRAMME FIXING 22 DECEMBER FOR NOMINATIONS. CAN FIX MEETING LATER.

VALLABHBHAI

49

24 November 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

The Punjab nominations have at last forced your hands and you had to advance the date of the Working Committee meeting. It will interfere with your required rest. The Punjab nominations will probably be very controversial, but I have not yet received the proposals. They are busy with the Central Assembly elections, and they will probably be free today. There are two constituencies about which decision will have to be taken immediately: the one is about the university and the other about commerce. These elections are likely to take place earlier. For the university

seat, I hear that if Sjt. Bhim Sen Sachar¹ is asked to stand, we may get it uncontested, or even if there is a contest, there would be no difficulty about winning it. The present incumbent is Sir Manohar Lal.² There is one complication in this affair. Sjt. Bhim Sen's father-in-law has declared his candidature for this seat. He is a title-holder, but is prepared to give up his title and accept the Congress ticket, if given. How far we can trust such people is a question. If Sjt. Bhim Sen is asked to stand, he will withdraw. This is what I have heard but I have got no proposals as yet. About the other seat also, I have not received any proposals. If there is any proposal received here, I will communicate to you by telegram for your advice, if there is urgency. The remaining proposals will be disposed of when we meet at Calcutta.

I hope your stay at Bindhachal has improved your health.

The situation in Calcutta in the meanwhile has greatly deteriorated. There has been firing several times and unfortunately the students have shown great indiscipline. It compromises our position as a national organisation. The local leaders have not been able to control the crowds. This kind of indiscipline is spreading and we must take strong action to improve the situation in future.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

50

TELEGRAM

Calcutta
19 December 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Powerfarm
Bombay

THE MAN IS COMING FROM PUNJAB. PLEASE ARRANGE AS SETTLED.

ABULKALAMAZAD

¹ Joined non-co-operation movement in 1921; Secretary, Punjab PCC, 1921; MLA (Punjab) 1939-45; Finance Minister (Punjab) 1946-49; Chief Minister, 1952-56; Governor of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh; High Commissioner in Ceylon

² A prominent member of Unionist Party and Finance Minister of Punjab before partition

21 December 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I received your telegram of the 19th inst. yesterday evening. I have already sent a cheque for Rs. 50,000, but I am afraid we are wasting good money for nothing and Congress reputation will in the end suffer badly. I am enclosing herewith a Press cutting from which you will see what type of candidates are being put up by the Ahrar party in the Punjab for whom they want our help. From this cutting you will see that immediately the League candidates' nominations were declared invalid, the Ahrar candidates, who remained on the scene and whose nominations were declared valid, joined the Muslim League. It is very sad that such candidates are chosen to oppose the League. In any case it is very unwise that we should be mixed up with such a shady transaction. I would still request you to reconsider the whole position and withhold the help. May I again remind you that my information is that the Ahrars will get no place except one or two in the Punjab?

I am afraid we have mishandled the whole Punjab situation. We have to fight the Akalis as there has been no settlement as was expected and we will not get more than 5 or 6 seats after a good deal of expense which could be easily avoided.

Please excuse me for bringing these facts to your notice, but I have done so as I have been considerably oppressed by a feeling of failure in duty at a critical juncture in one of the most important provinces in these elections. I do not wish to blame anybody but I do feel that if we continue to handle affairs in the same fashion, we will suffer a serious defeat in spite of such huge expenditure and a good deal of time and energy being spent over it.

I trust your health has improved.

My attention has just been drawn to a Press report from Nagpur wherein a very mischievous account has appeared about the election of the party leader in the Central Assembly. You must

have noticed it also. It appears in the Hindustan Standard of the 20th inst.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Calcutta

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TELEGRAM

30 December 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Powerfarm
Bombay

PLEASE SEND ONE LAKH RUPEES TO SITARAM IMMEDIATELY.

ABULKALAMAZAD

53

TELEGRAM

Bombay
1 January 1946

Maulana Azad
Bindhachal

YOUR WIRE. ONE LAKH SENT TO [Sitaram] SEKHSERIA. PROPOSE
GALLING ASSEMBLY PARTY MEETING EIGHTEENTH ELECTION BOARD
MEETING SEVENTEENTH. WIRE CONSENT.

VALLABHBHAI

54

1 January 1946

My dear Maulana Sahib,

Your telegram was received yesterday for sending a lakh of rupees to Sitaram Sekhseria, and I have immediately made arrangements by telephone accordingly. In the Press I read yesterday that Shamsuddin Ahmed has resigned from the Krishak Praja

Party and joined the Muslim League. It is difficult to rely upon anybody. This gentleman was meeting me at Calcutta and assuring me about securing a large number of seats if help was given.

In the Punjab, the two parties are still quarrelling with increasing vigour. If Maulana Daud engages his personal secretary for election work from one party, the other party wants him to keep another from their party. These quarrels have been encouraged and it has a very demoralising effect on the general situation. I have got a wire from Maulana Daud today asking me to send Pandit Jawaharlal to the Punjab for nearly two weeks. I do not understand how this can be done and what advantage one could gain by such tours. At present Jawaharlal is going to Sind. His tours create a lot of enthusiasm and huge crowds gather together, but these demonstrations have no value for the purpose of election, as they influence no voters in the Muslim constituencies. The Hindu voters need no encouragement.

I have sent you a telegram this morning suggesting that the Election Board meeting should be kept on the 17th and the Assembly Party meeting should be kept on the 18th. I would have kept it earlier but as some members are not free till the 18th, I have suggested that date.

Apparently you were detained at Calcutta longer than expected. So your stay at Bindhachal will again be interrupted by the Delhi meeting. It is possible that we may not get proposals from all the provinces by that time. The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee has already asked for more time.

Rajaji's affair has been settled, — for the time being, and if both parties abide by it loyally, things may improve.

I hope you will improve by the change.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

Bindhachal
2 January 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I had received your last letter in Calcutta. Before my departure I had sent a telegram to you to send money to Sitaram Seksaria. I hope you have arranged the needful.

The affairs of the Punjab are in a muddle for the last several years. The only remedy was to release the Congress from the contending parties and infuse fresh blood in it. But when I went and studied the situation on the spot, I felt that it was difficult to bring forward new men just at that time. Therefore, there was no way out but to keep the old element there, and to let in the new element to a certain extent as a balancing power till fresh elections of the Congress are held. I think that there could be no other method for the time being, and I hold the same opinion even now.

I had advised Dr. Gopichand and Ghaznavi, when I was in Lahore, that if the Akalis left 16 or 17 seats for the Congress, they should not contest the remaining seats, and they could make a settlement with them on that basis. I have been giving them the same advice after my return from Lahore. In Calcutta too we directed them on the same lines; so much so that I told Ghaznavi on his departure from Calcutta to give up a few (2 or 3) more seats if there could be a settlement on that basis. But the fact is that the Akalis were not prepared to make any concession or settlement.

If we totally ignore Congressite Sikhs, the result would be that the Congress will lose all hold among the Sikhs, which is impossible for us to do.

I fully appreciate your opinion about the Ahrars. No one has yet reached here on their behalf. I shall not do anything in this respect unless I am fully satisfied with the situation.

Now I want to say a few words about the Bengal situation. I learnt after your departure from Calcutta that you have constituted a finance committee with full powers to do what they deem fit. Had I known that before, I would not have remained in the dark and would have adopted the necessary attitude.

I tried to devise a method of smooth working in Calcutta, but now I find that nothing would be achieved by this method, and all attempts would produce no appreciable result.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
68 Marine Drive
Bombay

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TELEGRAM

Bindhachal
2 January 1946

Sardar Patel
Powerfarm
Bombay

ARRANGING ASSEMBLY PARTY MEETING EIGHTEENTH AND ELECTION
BOARD NINETEENTH.

ABULKALAMAZAD

57

2 January 1946

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I received your letter of 2nd inst. today.

I am receiving complaints regarding the Punjab nominations even now but we can do nothing in the matter at this stage. You must also be receiving such complaints.

Maulvi Gani has come here from Ludhiana and he wants financial help for the Provincial Assembly elections. He has not been authorised by anybody, but he is a member of the election board. Last week I got letters from Maulana Daud and Dr. Gopichand asking for financial help. Yesterday I got a telephone message from Sjt. Bhim Sen Sachar and he wants me to send Rs. 5 lakhs. Today I have got a telegram saying that they are sending Seth Sudarshan¹ for this purpose. This is a telegram signed

¹ Chief Whip, Congress Legislative Party, Punjab, 1946-56; close associate of Sardar Baldev Singh and Dr. Gopichand Bhargava

by both Sjt. Sachar and Maulana Daud. Even in their demands they are not united and different people make different demands. Their estimates differ violently. In these circumstances to render proper help becomes so difficult that one does not know what to do. However, I am trying my best to help them.

It seems impossible now to make any settlement with the Akalis, and perhaps we must wait till the results are out.

I am surprised to read the last two paragraphs of your letter about the Bengal situation. I have done nothing there without your consultation and approval. I first wrote you a letter from Poona for the framing of a budget in consultation with Prafulla Babu, Sarat Babu and Kiron Babu. You four sat together and sent me the budget. After that I came to Calcutta and we formed the election board, after our work was over, and this was done with your full approval. When I left Calcutta, I gave the secretary of the board Rs. 50,000 and informed him of what I had given to you before. Nothing more was done by me and I know nothing of any finance committee being constituted there by anybody. For the first time I hear about it from you. I only told the board that for the proper spending of the help that I may be called upon to give, I will hold them responsible. That was natural because of our experience in the Central Assembly elections.

I do not know what method you devised for smooth working in Calcutta and you have never told me anything about it.

A Muslim board was formed after I left, of which I was not informed. Shamsuddin, the secretary of this board, joined the League immediately after that. This I have learnt from the newspapers. Another gentleman has been appointed in his place.

My information, according to reports from Bengal, is that we can expect no more than about 8 to 10 Muslim seats. The rest will all go to the League. In my opinion, the proper course all over India would have been to contest the elections on Congress tickets. The independent machinery will give us no more seats in Bengal, but I have subordinated my opinion in these matters both in the Punjab and in Bengal and elsewhere to yours without question. Therefore, I do not know why you suggest that any finance committee has been appointed by me or that you have devised any method and that nothing would be achieved by that method and no appreciable result would be produced.

I wired you for approval to fix meetings in Delhi on the 18th and 19th. In reply your telegram came stating that you are

arranging these meetings on those dates. I have not yet seen anything in the Press about it, nor do I know whether invitations have been issued or not.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

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TELEGRAM

Bindhachal
5 January 1946

Sardar Patel
Bombay

DO YOU AGREE HOLDING PARLIAMENTARY BOARD NINETEENTH?
PLEASE WIRE BINDHACHAL.

ABUL KALAM AZAD

59

TELEGRAM

6 January 1946

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

YOUR WIRE. AGREE HOLDING MEETING NINETEENTH. HOPE YOU
ARRANGED CALLING ASSEMBLY PARTY MEETING EIGHTEENTH.

VALLABHBHAI

60

8 January 1946

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I have received a letter from the Frontier where people want you for a couple of days in order to counteract whatever mischief that may have been done by Mr. Jinnah's visit there.

I do not know whether you will be able to respond, particularly because of your health.

Yesterday I got a telegram from you suggesting the holding of the Congress a month later than the announced programme, and also the change of venue from Delhi to Bombay. I am afraid the postponement of the Congress for a month will drive us into the heart of the hot season and would be very inconvenient to all. However, I have consulted the Bombay people and they are willing to undertake the responsibility if it is so decided, but the decision must be taken without delay.

I have received a telegram from Asaf Ali this morning that the Delhi people want to stick to their decision of holding it there.

Seth Sudarshan had come here and so had Gilani.¹ They had a frank talk in my presence. Some sort of understanding between the Akalis and the Congress appears to be possible and they have drafted some tentative proposals which they will take to Maulana Daud and the Akali Party there. If they all agree, settlement may secure us about 16 seats from the Sikh constituencies, and perhaps improve the atmosphere.

Sudarshan has brought a letter for a demand of money which is very large. He wants Rs. 6 lakhs and that demand is now supported by Maulana Daud. The previous day Maulvi Gani had come to me. His demand was that two lakhs would fully meet with their requirements. On that day I had a letter from Dr. Gopichand. He thought that a lakh and a half would be sufficient. These conflicting demands make our work difficult. For the present I have sent them one lakh and have asked them to sit together and send me a joint demand agreed upon by all of them. If they agree, I will try my best to help them, but it is difficult to make them agree.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

¹ B. S. Gilani, private secretary to Sardar Baldev Singh; also a spokesman of Christians

61

TELEGRAM

Bindhachal
6 January 1946

Sardar Patel
Bombay

ALL PROVINCES EMPHASISE INABILITY MAKING NEW COMMITTEES UPTO APRIL. JAWAHARLAL AND KRIPALANI FAVOUR REMOVING ANNUAL SESSION ONE MONTH FURTHER. I SUGGEST FIFTEENTH MAY BOMBAY. WIRE YOUR OPINION.

ABULKALAMAZAD

62

TELEGRAM

7 January 1946

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

ARRANGEMENTS BOMBAY POSSIBLE IF IMMEDIATE DECISION. MY VIEW MIDDLE APRIL ADVISABLE. LATER HOT SEASON FULL SWING. COMMITTEES MUST FINISH ELECTIONS ACCORDING PROGRAMME ANNOUNCED.

VALLABHBHAI

63

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
29 January 1946

Sardar Patel
Bombay

REACHING KARACHI 31ST.

ABULKALAMAZAD

Bombay
11 February 1946

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I have not heard from you since you left Karachi. About your proposal to the League, its reaction can be seen from the attached cutting from the League's mouthpiece in Calcutta.

I am keeping the committee meeting from the 16th to consider proposals received from Nagpur, Andhra, Tamil Nad, Kerala and Orissa. It will take more than a week to dispose of these applications. I am afraid it will be a very troublesome job, but there is no other way. I have invited the members of the committee, but I doubt whether anybody except Sjt. Shankarrao will come here. The nomination dates are coming very near and I must finish them.

Please let me know what has been done in Assam.

Haji Moula Bux is coming here tomorrow and if there is anything to report, I will write to you.

When are you going to the Punjab? The elections there will soon be over and you will have to be there in time.

The food situation in the country has been very badly handled by the Government. The position is getting more serious. The Viceroy is recommending cutting down of rations which are already not enough to sustain a normal human being. He has invited Bapu and Jinnah. Bapu is not in a position to go there, because of the strain on his health in Madras. I understand the Viceroy's Secretary will see him at Sevagram. He wants, probably, the public to co-operate in cutting down rations. How can public support a proposal which would result in starving the people?

I forgot to inform you that while I was at Karachi a demand for money came from Calcutta and my son has already remitted a very large portion of the budgeted amount.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

65

TELEGRAM

Calcutta
14 February 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

YOUR MESSAGE [See enclosure] AND TELEGRAM. ATTENDING MEETING IF POSSIBLE. BOARD MAY DISPOSE NOMINATIONS REMAINING PROVINCES AFTER WHICH I SHALL DISPOSE APPEALS IF ANY.

ABULKALAMAZAD

ENCLOSURE .

SARDAR PATEL'S MESSAGE FOR MAULANA AZAD THROUGH API

YOUR TELEGRAM. THERE CAN BE NO APPEAL AGAINST CENTRAL BOARD'S DECISION. BESIDES, SUCH A COURSE WOULD ENCOURAGE INDISCIPLINE AND ENDLESS DISPUTES. BEST COURSE FOR YOU IS TO FLY TO BOMBAY FROM DELHI. BAPU ALSO WILL BE IN BOMBAY ON THE 18TH AND 19TH. PUNJAB ELECTIONS BEING DELAYED. YOU ARE NOT WANTED THERE TILL 25TH. PLEASE REPLY.

DR. CHOITHRAM¹ AND NICHALDAS ARE MEETING YOU AT DELHI AND CONVEYING ALL INFORMATION INCLUDING MR. [G. M.] SYED'S² INTERVIEW WITH GOVERNOR. HE HAS VIOLATED PARLIAMENTARY CONVENTION AND ISSUED PRESS NOTE CONTAINING FALSE STATEMENTS. ALSO ACTED AGAINST THE VICEROY'S PROMISE TO YOU THAT GOVERNORS WILL DEAL FAIRLY AND NOT INTERFERE. PUBLIC MEETING GIVING THREATS IMMEDIATELY AFTER FORMATION OF MINISTRY PRESIDED OVER BY LIAQUAT ENCOURAGES VIOLENCE AND TROUBLE. VICEROY MAY BE INFORMED ACCORDINGLY.

¹ Choithram Gidwani, Congress leader of Sind; president, Sind PCC before independence; chief spokesman of Sind in Congress organization

² Prominent leader of Muslims in Sind opposed to Muslim League

MAULANA AZAD'S MESSAGE TO SARDAR PATEL THROUGH API

Calcutta
14 February 1946

YOUR MESSAGE. OWING TO ILLNESS MY PROGRAMME IS STILL UNSETTLED. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY BUT THAT THE BOARD MAY GIVE ITS FINAL DECISION.

Calcutta
19 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I caught fever on my arrival at Shillong, which is still persisting.

The differences between the Assam Valley and the Surma Valley have gone deep in Assam, and now every question is viewed from the same point of view. The rivalry of these groups went on in regard to Ministry also, and as you know, other groups had their demands too. However I have tried that these sentiments may not surge up any further, so that the demands of various groups as well as the efficiency of the Cabinet may not suffer. A great deal of success has, therefore, been achieved, and so far as I could gauge, I have found that the whole province was satisfied and happy over it. Basanto Babu has been taken in the Ministry, Mr. Sarma has been nominated for Speakership from the Assam Valley, who will prove a suitable person for it.

Only one man, Abdul Mutalib, out of the three Nationalist Muslims returned to the legislature, deserved to be included in the Ministry. He has, therefore, been taken. The remaining two seats have been kept vacant. Sir Mohammad Sadullah¹ has been told that if he co-operates with the Congress party to work out its parliamentary programme, then the Congress will gladly include two of his men in the Ministry. I have prepared Sadullah

¹ Muslim League leader of Assam; member of Assam Governor's Executive Council before provincial autonomy; appointed Prime Minister of Assam after resignation of Congress Ministry in 1939

for this, but Jinnah will probably not agree to such a proposal. However, we have clarified our position.

On my arrival here I got a message of the Viceroy that he desired to meet me. If I get fit I shall leave for Delhi on the 15th. After which I may have to go to Peshawar and Lahore. Under the circumstances it is difficult for me to get time to go to Bombay. You have called the Parliamentary Board on the 16th. It should finish the work of the remaining provinces. If any appeal will be filed in this connection, you would send it to me, and I will decide it in consultation with you.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Congress House
Bombay

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Bombay
23 February 1946

My dear Maulana Sahib,

In continuation of our telephonic conversation yesterday, I feel bound to make it clear that the nomination of Sjt. Pandey is nothing but an unexpected letting down of the Central Board and a total disregard of ordinary courtesy. If you wanted to change the decision, you should have at least consulted us. The analogy of the change in the UP decisions is not at all applicable here. That question was settled at the time when the decisions were taken by the Board and the matter was left open in certain cases; even there it was decided that nothing is to be done without consulting the provincial leaders, including Pantji, one of the members of the Board concerned. In Mahakoshal no such reservation was made. There can be no appeal against the decision of the Board, including you as chairman, and if such authority were vested in you, there should have been a specific provision in the Working Committee's resolution. Besides, if you were the appellate authority, you cannot at the same time be the Chairman of the Board, whose decisions are appealable to you alone. This is a strange procedure and your action has lowered our prestige in the eyes of the people of that province. I enclose herewith a

copy of a letter received from [R. S.] Shuklaji¹, who was also not consulted by you. I had issued a public statement that the decisions of Mahakoshal are final and are not appealable and hence there will be no change. You referred to certain documents in your telephonic conversation, which were shown to me also. Sjt. Chedilal was here and he had explained to me about it. Sjt. Pandey was also here and I had seen Sjt. Kishorelal Mashruwalla.² They were informed that there will be no change. I had not the slightest idea that they will come to you and get a reversal of the Board's decision. If I had known that they were to come to you, I would have written to you about it. I had also seen your Press statement to the effect that these decisions were final. If you had taken all the powers alone and disposed of all the nominations, nobody would have been more glad than myself. The procedure adopted in this case is such that I cannot understand it at all.

From your conversation on the phone, I also understood that my coming to Lahore is likely to embarrass you and that I should rather not go there. But for Maulana Daud's invitation to go there, I would not have agreed to do so, particularly in my present state of health. In Sind also, I went there because a special messenger came to call me simultaneously when another came to Delhi to call you. If you had expressed the slightest desire that I should not go, I would have agreed with the greatest pleasure. But I feel from your conversation that I have lost your confidence and therefore you don't want me to go there. I do not wish to say anything about what has been represented to you and about the group that has given you that impression but the least that I could do in the circumstances is that in view of your attitude I propose to immediately tender my resignation from the Central Board as well as the Working Committee. I should be grateful if you will relieve me without any delay as my continuance in the present state is likely to give me constant mental trouble and anxiety. I regret very much to say that I have to take this action at a very critical juncture but I feel that the

¹ Entered Legislative Council of Central Provinces in 1923 as member of Swaraj Party; Minister of Education, July 1937; Premier, August 1938; Chief Minister of CP after Independence and later of reformed State of Madhya Pradesh until 1956

² Exponent of Gandhian philosophy; editor, *Young India*, and *Harijan*; member, Zakir Husain Committee on Basic Education

treatment that has been given to me is, to say the least, unexpected and undeserved and hence no alternative is left to me.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
C/o Frontier PCC
Peshawar

69

TELEGRAM

Peshawar
23 February 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

WOULD BE EXTREMELY HELPFUL. IF YOU COULD KINDLY COME LAHORE. OTHERWISE DO FLY TO DELHI AT LEAST. STAYING DELHI 25TH 26TH.

ABUL KALAM AZAD

70

TELEGRAM

Bombay
25 February 1946

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
New Delhi

YOUR WIRE. REGRET CANNOT LEAVE BOMBAY. PLEASE REFER MY LETTER 23RD ADDRESSED PESHAWAR COPY DELHI. JAWAHAR JUST ARRIVED.

VALLABHBHAI

71

Camp Lahore
28 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have received your letter of 23 February 1946. I am extremely sorry that you were put to so much trouble owing to

this affair. I assure you that I had not viewed this matter in the light you have taken it, nor was I under the slightest impression that I am taking a decision against the decision of the Board. You are aware that I had received appeals of certain candidates for the Central Assembly as well, and there was a case about which I had personal knowledge and I held quite a contrary view about it to that of the decision of the Board. Nevertheless, I did not like to take any action on it, more than that I apprised you of my impressions. And when you replied that a change would be improper, I accepted your view unhesitatingly, and rejected the appeal. Under the circumstances it is obvious that there could be no reason for me to adopt a different attitude in this matter, or would have knowingly desired to undermine the prestige of the Board. You can never expect such a thing from me.

We are working together for the last 26 years in perfect unison. Every morning and evening of our public life has passed in amity and concord. We should not hurry in forming opinions against one another. I always expect a generous attitude from you and other co-workers, and [I] think that I deserve it.

The whole affair is detailed below:

We had made final selections of the candidates of several provinces in Delhi. But at the same time complaints were received from the candidates that the provincial Boards had not published or informed them of their decisions before, and therefore they said that they did not get an opportunity to appeal to the Central Board, if they wanted to do so. We had felt the weight of these complaints and had formed the opinion that we will reconsider on appeal special cases deserving a revision of the Delhi selections. Accordingly 30 appeals were received from UP, and out of them I admitted eleven and changed the previous decision.

Like UP, telegrams and letters of protest began to pour in from Mahakoshal also. Every letter complained that the provincial board had not made its decisions public, and the list was published in the local papers only on 5 February, and therefore they wanted to have a chance for appeal. I did not take any notice of the complaints. But when I returned from Shillong, this new appeal came before me, and I had occasion to go through all the papers and the circumstances. I was totally unaware of the fact that the case had already been considered by you, nor I came across any statement from you about the finality of decisions about Mahakoshal. On considering the appeal I concluded that sheer injustice was done to the appellant.

Even then I did not give my decision immediately. I wired to the provincial board and awaited a reply for five days. As no satisfactory reply was received, I decided the case according to my judgment. Had you informed me in time, I would certainly have not liked to interfere.

I tell you once again that I am really very sorry over this situation, and assure you that whatever was done was due to the fact that I did not know of any announcement of the Board in this respect.

Appeals are still pouring in from Madras and Andhra; but I have given a statement to the Press that the appeals will be heard no more.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Congress House
Bombay

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Bombay
6 March 1946

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I have received your letter of 28 February today.

I know that you had received appeals of certain candidates for the Central Assembly and in one case you differed from the decision of the Board but at that time also I had made it clear that no appeal can be entertained by you on the decisions of the Board. I do not know how you have got such an idea even now. I may also bring to your notice that in that particular case, the papers were circulated amongst the members of the Board who were not likely to attend and they had sent their opinion. You were also informed that the proposal of Sjt. Bhargava in that case was strongly supported by Sjt. Asaf Ali, who had personal knowledge about the merits of the candidates concerned. You had not sent your opinion in time and the Board finally decided after consulting Maulana Daud in Poona. This decision was announced and also communicated to the candidate concerned. Supporters of the rejected candidate approached you at Calcutta and you insisted on a change till the last moment on the ground of your having received an appeal.

You did not conceal your resentment against the decision of the Board and gave vent to your feelings when we met at Calcutta, in the presence of some of the interested parties, but I thought it better to keep quiet at that time. You are certainly entitled to claim a generous attitude from us and I have done my best to do so, but you must also make allowance for an honest difference of opinion. You cannot insist that your opinion is the only correct one. In the Punjab we honestly held different opinions but you have never recognised that there is scope for such a difference of opinion in that matter and you have missed no opportunity to remind us about it.

You are certainly entitled to a generous attitude from us; personally I have done my best to do so. In the Punjab I have differed strongly from you in the matter of the election campaign on many points, including the question of financial help to be given to the Congress party. I was expected to help them only in the matter of Muslim constituencies. In this they have lost all [along] the line and I knew that they were going to lose. They insisted on financial help being given for non-Muslim constituencies and tried to put pressure on me through you. I have agreed without hesitation to whatever you suggested in this connection. They have avoided all responsibility but as you were all working against heavy odds, I thought it my duty to accept your suggestions without question. In the matter of selection of candidates in the Punjab also, we had differences but we have endorsed everything that you have done without the slightest hesitation.

No doubt there were complaints received by you from various provinces but they were received by us also. I may be permitted to say that these appeals and protests have been encouraged by an impression that has been created all over that the President can hear appeals over the decisions of the Board. Somehow or other, you have held that idea in spite of my protests from the time of the Central Assembly elections.

In the UP the position was different and I have already written to you about it in my last letter. In the case of the CP your decision has been arbitrary and ex parte. I have already sent you a copy of Shuklaji's letter from which you must have seen that he was assured by me several times that the decisions of the Central Board in Mahakoshal were final and not liable to any change. You were a party to the decision and there was no reservation for reconsideration or review, nor was any notice given to us about the proposed change.



LADBAI, MOTHER OF SARDAR PATEL



VALLABHBHAI AS A SCHOOLBOY

Your non-interference in the matter of appeals pouring in from Madras and Andhra referred to in your letter cannot in any manner justify the arbitrary and ex parte decision in Mahakoshal ignoring the Board altogether. I am afraid you have not realised the ridiculous position in which we are placed in the whole of that province.

Perhaps it may be that your approach to these questions is different from mine and therefore it is difficult for me to understand or appreciate it. It would therefore be better to relieve me from this embarrassing position altogether, as early as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
President
Indian National Congress
New Delhi

CHAPTER II
CONGRESS PROSPECTS

73

Allahabad
31 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am writing to you about a matter which distresses me somewhat, although there is not much that you can do about it. Everywhere that I go I see tremendous enthusiasm for the Congress and at the same time some kind of a hiatus between the local Congress group in control and the general public. In many places these old committees, which are still functioning, are out of touch with most of the people who functioned during the last three or four years. The recent rules asking them to co-opt members to fill vacancies have, curiously enough, worsened the situation. The people co-opted have often been specially chosen to strengthen the old group. There are cases of persons being co-opted who indirectly opposed the movement or apologised or indulged in black markets and the like. The result is great dissatisfaction with the ruling group.

I am speaking from personal knowledge of my own province which in many ways is better organised than several other provinces. I imagine conditions are much worse in some other provinces.

In the Punjab I am very dissatisfied with recent developments. I know a large number of enthusiastic young people who are simply not allowed to work. For my part I have no time and no inclination to enter into local squabbles.

I have been receiving many telegrams of protest against the nomination of candidates for election from various provinces. No doubt you have received far more and are in a better position to judge. I cannot, however, help feeling disturbed at some of the choices made or proposed in the Punjab, in Bengal and in Sind. I earnestly trust that people who have played us false in the past will not be encouraged now.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

Poona
4 November 1945

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have received your letters of the 30th and 31st ultimo.

There is no doubt considerable mass awakening and tremendous enthusiasm all round, but I am afraid much of it is superficial. Demonstrative enthusiasm will not help us much unless we take proper care to divert it into the right channel. People require proper direction. They are very responsive at present but some of our leaders who are in direct touch with them do not understand their response. I will quote an instance which has given me a shock. You have perhaps heard of a case of dacoity committed by Dr. [Murray Gow] Purdy¹ in Bombay. He is under trial. Twice he attempted to escape from jail by violence but he was rearrested. I was surprised, and so also you will be, to hear that our friends Asoka Mehta² and Abid Ali³ issued a public appeal for funds to defend the case of this scoundrel. He is no political prisoner. To give political colour to such dacoities would rapidly lead the Congress to destruction.

Asoka Mehta met me last week when I did not know these facts. He asked me to help him in securing the assistance of Mr. [H.R.] Pardiwala⁴ to whom he wanted to entrust the responsibility of the defence of another case in Dhulia. I called Pardiwala and asked him whether he would go to defend this case. He said that if he was ordered by me he would go, but he was unwilling to do so as in all conscience he did not like

¹ Came to Bombay from South Africa early in World War II and formed revolutionary group known as the Mazdoor Trotskyite Party; together with some of his followers, raided a jeweller's shop in the city; sentenced to imprisonment and later deported.

² Founder-member of Congress Socialist Party; member of its Executive Committee, 1934-38; member, Socialist party, 1948-52 and PSP, 1953-63; member, Lok Sabha, 1954-57 and 1957-62; Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, 1963-67; Union Cabinet Minister, 1966-68

³ Labour leader of Bombay; member, Legislative Assembly, Bombay, 1949-52; later joined Nehru Government as Deputy Minister for Labour.

⁴ Advocate of Bombay High Court with Congress sympathies

to identify himself with such cases. He told me that it was also a case of dacoity.

The selection of candidates for the election is a bad business. I have been flooded with applications, appeals, complaints, protests and recommendations from various quarters. It is a sad thing to see this mad competition for going into the Councils. We must discourage this. Most of these complaints are absolutely false. No selection is possible which would satisfy all. There are complaints from all provinces. You say that you cannot help feeling disturbed at some of the choices made or proposed in the Punjab, Bengal and Sind. I do not know whether you refer to the selections for the Central Assembly or for the provinces. So far as the Central Assembly is concerned no selections were made from Bengal till the date of your letter to me, i.e. the 31st. I got the telegram about the Bengal selections on the 1st. The Bengal selections have all been made by Maulana [Azad] himself. I have no knowledge about these selections. About Sind, there is only one seat in the Central Assembly, and the man selected has been returned unopposed. His was a unanimous recommendation. His rival approached Asaf Ali at Delhi and Maulana at Calcutta and also came here to see me personally. He has never been in the Congress but he is a good lawyer and secured a recommendation from Asaf Ali and Maulana. About the Punjab, there is a complaint about the selection of Dr. Gopichand's brother. He was also recommended by Asaf Ali. You know there are two strong parties in the Punjab. Dr. Satyapal's¹ group sent numerous letters, telegrams and protests against the selection to all members of the Board. The selection was made by the Board after calling Maulana Daud Ghaznavi² from the Punjab and in consultation with him by the Board at Poona. About the provincial nominations I have not yet received any proposal.

There were complaints about Dr. [G.V.] Deshmukh's selection also, but we have selected him as there was no other alternative and after consulting Bapu.

Maulana has written to Bapu suggesting 15 December as the date for the meeting of the [Congress] Working Committee at Calcutta. I am afraid [feel strongly] it would be better to meet early in December, if not earlier. We have promised a manifesto for the

¹ A Congress leader of Punjab from Amritsar

² Contemporary of Gopichand Bhargava and Satyapal in Punjab; President of POC for several years

provincial elections to be placed before the AICC and in some provinces the elections are in January. It is necessary to meet earlier, but much depends on Maulana's health and convenience. You can, if you agree with me, wire to him or write to him about it.

I have come here after finishing the greater part of my work in Bombay. We propose to stay here till the 19th of this month. That ends the period of my trial here.

I have shown your letter of 30 October to Mr. [J. B.] Kripalani who is also here. I have discussed it with Bapu also and we think no useful purpose will be served by giving details of individual cases to [Arthur] Henderson.¹ His replies are very unsatisfactory and we expect nothing to come out of it. I am enclosing a copy of my letter to [Krishna] Menon,² to whom I have written as desired by you.

Many thanks for your good wishes.

It was not appropriate to ask you to come to Bombay interrupting your programme, for all know that you are so overworked and to call you all the way from U.P. to preside over a function which was wholly unnecessary at this stage was quite indiscreet. When I learned about it I rebuked them also. I am glad you did not come.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Allahabad

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Poona
7 November 1945

My dear Jawahar,

You must have received my letter on your arrival in Bombay. I understand you will be in Bombay for more than a week.

Would it be possible for you to spare a few hours to meet us? If you can come by plane it will be only half an hour's journey. There are many important matters to be discussed.

¹ Under-Secretary of State for India and Burma in Attlee Government

² Secretary, India League, London, 1929-47; Special Representative in London of Indian Government, 1946-47; Indian High Commissioner, 1947-52; last assignment Defence Minister; resigned from Nehru Cabinet in 1962 after Sino-Indian conflict; member, Lok Sabha

Regarding the Central Election Board, I am in a fix. Maulana is not keeping good health and is going out somewhere for a change for about a month or more. He proposes to call a meeting of the Working Committee in Calcutta by the end of December. It will be very late. We have promised an election manifesto for the provincial elections to be placed before the AICC. Asaf Ali is busy with his own election and with the INA Defence Committee work. Rajen Babu and Pantji¹ [G. B. Pant] are touring in their provinces for the Central Assembly elections and other important Congress work. I have no authority to dispose of urgent proposals coming from the provinces where elections take place earlier for the selection of candidates for the depressed classes, labour and other constituencies, and the Board is not meeting. Nobody has authority to dispose of these matters.

In the matter of selections of the Central Assembly Maulana was dissatisfied and expressed his disapproval in some cases after the scrutiny was over.

We are leaving this place on the 19th for good. Bapu goes to Sevagram and I will be in Bombay. If we can hold a meeting of the Working Committee before Maulana's departure for Bindhachal, we can deal with many urgent matters. Can you put yourself in touch with Maulana? I doubt whether it is possible to do so.

The Punjab affairs are in a bad way. In the Central Assembly we have selected two Sikh candidates for the two Sikh constituencies. These selections were unanimous, both here and in the provincial board. There have been no protests. We were told that we will win both these seats without any difficulty. I now find that our people in charge there are not confident. The Akali Dal is putting a stiff fight and all the important forces have gathered behind Master Tara Singh² and Baldev Singh³ to defeat

¹ Elected member, AICC, in 1916; elected to UP Legislative Council, 1923, on Swaraj Party ticket and party's leader in Council for 7 years; member of Congress Working Committee from 1931 onwards; elected to Central Assembly in 1934 and was Deputy Leader of Congress party; elected leader of Congress party in UP Assembly in 1937 and became its first Premier; member, Central Parliamentary Board and Chairman, UP Parliamentary Board. After Independence he was Chief Minister of UP from April 1946 to January 1955. He was Home Minister, Government of India and Deputy Leader, Congress Parliamentary Party from January 10, 1955 until death

² Akali Sikh leader of Punjab; Secretary and later President, Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee; after World War II resigned from Congress and organised Panthic Akali party which agitated for a state having Sikh majority

³ Started political career as Akali leader; Development Minister, Punjab, 1942-46; joined Congress and served as Defence Minister, 1946-52

the Congress. A defeat in the Centre will have a very bad repercussion in the province. [B.S.] Gilani had gone to Maulana with a proposal to settle the Sikh question so as to avoid a fight. I am enclosing a copy of this letter for your information. Gopichand has wired to me today saying that the chances for our candidate Sardar Kapoor Singh¹ are 50/50. When his proposal was sanctioned both Maulana Ghaznavi and he were very sanguine of success. Master Tara Singh has sent a man with a letter to me, probably suggesting some proposals for a settlement. This man is detained in Bombay owing to his suddenly being laid up with fever. I had a telephone message from him for an appointment tomorrow. I do not know how to dispose of this matter.

The Punjab question has been tackled by Maulana on the spot. But the developments that have taken place subsequently appear to have changed the situation. You must also have noticed Khizr's² [Sir Khizr Hayat Khan] statement in the Press. It is difficult to rely upon such people.

In the Central Assembly elections we have already secured 50 per cent seats uncontested. In the majority of the remaining seats there is hardly any serious contest. The Hindu Mahasabha will be finally finished this time, but the Sikh and the [Muslim] League questions have got to be handled very carefully.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

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Bombay
7 November 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I arrived here this evening and Dahyabhai gave me your letters. I told him to post your letters to Krishna Menon.

I quite agree with you about the Purdy case and am surprised at the attitudes of Asoka Mehta and Abid Ali.

I am uncertain about my programme here. Probably the Planning Committee will carry on till the 11th. If so I should like to come over to Poona to meet you and Bapu on the 12th. But the 12th is a Monday—Bapu's silence day—and that rather

¹ Congress leader among Sikhs; Speaker of Punjab Assembly

² Leading figure of Unionist Party of Punjab; Prime Minister of Punjab at the time of partition

is a difficulty. I shall phone or wire to you later. I am anxious to go back to Allahabad as soon as I can.

Yesterday in Delhi I had a deputation from so-called Congress Akalis who talked about avoiding a contest between the Congress and Akalis. Tara Singh had sent them to me though he kept away himself. They talked vaguely and I referred them to you. I understand that they have sent some kind of a messenger to you.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Poona
9 November 1945

My dear Jawaharlal,

I received your letter of the 7th today.

After our conversation on the telephone I have arranged with Bapu. He will take his silence at 12 noon on the 11th so that he can have a talk with you after 12 noon the next day when you will be here. I have sent word to Nargis¹ that you will be coming here by the last train which leaves Bombay at night on the 11th so as to arrive here on the morning of the 12th. She will meet you at Shivajinagar, where you have to alight.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Bombay

Poona
8 November 1945

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have just received a telegram from Maulana Daud Ghaznavi reading:

"PLEASE ASK PANDIT JAWAHARLAL VISIT PUNJAB HELP CENTRAL ELECTIONS. HIS TOUR ESSENTIAL BOTH SIKH AND GENERAL CONSTITUENCIES."

¹ Nargis Batlivala; granddaughter of Dadabhai Naoroji; one of the pioneers of Indian National Congress; closely associated with Gandhi's constructive work.

Master Tara Singh's man came here just now with a proposal for the settlement of the Sikh question, both for the Centre and the provincial elections. I have replied to him that no settlement is now possible so far as the Centre is concerned. As for provincial elections I have also told him that although the question can be considered if there is goodwill on both sides nothing can be done without reference to our President and the Central Election Board. I have also told him that the Election Board will consider the question only if any proposal for settlement is supported by the local Parliamentary Board as well as the large majority of Sikhs in the Congress.

I understand from the Press that you are there till the 15th. If you can go to the Punjab for a couple of days, it would be good because the Central Assembly result would have repercussions in the provincial one. Please inform Maulana Daud Ghaznavi about your decision directly.

Yours sincerely,
• Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Bombay

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Poona
15 November 1945

My dear Jawaharlal,

Early in the morning yesterday I tried to talk to you on the phone but I could not do so because it took a very long time to get at you and I had to go away for my treatment. Maniben [Sardar's daughter] therefore informed you about Maulana's telegram. Mridulaben [Miss Mridula Sarabhai]¹ also conveyed your message to me.

There is no advantage in holding the meeting of the Central Election Board at Bindhachal. Rajen Babu is not free before the 5th. So also Pantji. Both of them have authorised me to deal with the situation as it arises. Asaf Ali has not written to me about his plans. I am afraid he would also be too busy.

The Sind nominations date fixed by Government is 1 December and in fairness to them we must give sanction to their proposals at least a week before the date of nomination. These

¹ Member of family of textile magnates of Ahmedabad; twice General Secretary of Congress under Nehru's presidency

proposals are very controversial. Numerous telegrams and protests have been received. I have wired to Dr. Choithram [Gidwani] and Jairamdas [Doulattram] to come to Bombay next week. It is impossible to wait till the 5th or even till the 1st of December. Maulana is unwilling to give authority, nor is he prepared to deal with the proposals himself. Under the circumstances I will discuss all the proposals and objections with the Sind leaders and send a man, if possible, to Maulana, or finally dispose of them on my own responsibility.

The Scheduled Castes' proposals have already been sanctioned by me for UP and Assam. The Bihar proposals will have to be disposed of next week.

Therefore it would not be of much use to go to Bindhachal for our meeting. At the time of the meeting of the Working Committee we may also hold our meeting, when there will not be much work for us to do except the question of authorising somebody to deal with the proposals as and when received.

Before you left Poona I had not read the papers of the day. On going through them at night after you had left I was surprised to find an appeal in the name of Sjt. Sarat Bose for a crore of rupees for the relief of the INA. I do not understand this at all. We must settle this working at cross purposes from two different quarters when we meet at Calcutta. Whether we shall be able to do it or not I do not know.

I have got a letter from [Harekrushna] Mahtab¹ saying that the Forward Bloc² people are organising themselves to get into the Provincial Assembly. Similar information has been received from other sources. I do not know whether the Bloc people are going to merge themselves into the Congress or keep their separate entity and create centres of interest in all provinces.

In UP, I understand, the Socialist Party is unwilling to drop its identity and intends to work on the same lines as before. I do not know what is your own view about this matter.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Allahabad

¹ Member, Congress Working Committee from Orissa; thrice head of Ministry in the State; had a spell of office in Nehru Cabinet

² Founded by Subhas Chandra Bose after he broke away from Congress in 1938; its influence is largely restricted to West Bengal.

Bombay
21 November 1945

My dear Jawaharlal,

Capt. K.D. Pranjape, now in active service in the 14th Punjab Regiment, has approached me today for being selected as a candidate for the Provincial Assembly, CP.¹ He is a resident of Nagpur. His father is a candidate for the Hindu Mahasabha opposing Mr. Salve, the Congress nominee for the Central Assembly election from Nagpur. He has taken four days' leave to go to Nagpur to vote against his father and in favour of the Congress candidate. He has given his resignation from the service as conditions of service have dissatisfied him. He knows Capt. Shah Nawaz² [Khan] and his companions as he was once in the same regiment.

His suggestion is that there are officers in the Army who would like to go to the provincial assemblies in the various provinces and it would be better to take such men as it will create a tremendous impression in the Indian Army. He himself proposes to apply for it and wanted to know what would be the Congress policy in this behalf. It was a difficult question for me to answer straightaway, but I have assured him that individual applications will be considered most sympathetically. This question will have to be decided at the time of the next meeting of the Working Committee.

I have sent you the following telegram today:

KINDLY SEND YOUR IMPRESSIONS AND REACTIONS PUNJAB TOUR IMMEDIATELY.

You know that 12 December is the date fixed by the Punjab Government for the Punjab provincial election nomination and therefore the proposals for nominees will have to be disposed of early, i.e. before the date of our meeting at Calcutta. Your impressions about the situation in the province would be very

¹ Central Provinces

² Indian Army officer who, as prisoner of war, defected and joined Bose's INA; his trial in Red Fort in 1945 along with two of his comrades, Dhillon and Sehgal, became famous after successful defence organised by top Congress leaders; member of Council of Ministers during Prime Ministership of Nehru and Indira Gandhi

helpful in disposing of these proposals which, I expect, will be received soon. Please let me know about it as early as possible.

I trust the strain of the strenuous tour has not affected your health.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Allahabad

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Allahabad
26 November 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just returned from a tour of Meerut Division and received your letter of 21 November.

For some time past I have been definitely of the opinion that we should set up a few demobilised officers from the Army as Congress candidates for elections, provided of course we can find suitable men. I mentioned this fact to the Punjab PCC people and asked them to keep a look-out for such persons—Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. I wrote also to Pantji to the same effect. The Punjab of course is a province most concerned, and partly UP also is concerned. I know as a fact that any such action on our part will have far-reaching and favourable consequences. Some time back the question arose of setting up Shah Nawaz of the INA as a Congress candidate. I asked Shah Nawaz as well as Sehgal¹ and Dhillon² if they would be willing. All three were willing. Shah Nawaz's name is on the voters' list but I do not know if the other names are there. The INA people of course stand on a different footing from the regular Army men. I think that both the categories should be considered by us. There is at present a widespread and favourable feeling in the Army towards the Congress. Large numbers of these people are going to be demobilised soon and I feel it would be right for them to be given a place in the Congress and in the legislatures on our behalf.

About my Punjab impressions, I imagine that both the Congress Sikh candidates will win, but it is difficult for me to

¹ Defendant in INA trial

² Member of INA tried along with Sehgal and Shah Nawaz Khan

judge from a brief tour. Everywhere I was told that Baldev Singh was using Government officials to bring pressure on voters for the Akali Dal candidates. Indeed, the contest was more against these officials than against the Akali Dal itself. I think the Sikh elections have served a good purpose, whatever the results. It has brought all the progressive Sikh forces together in line with the Congress.

About the Punjab generally, the position seems to me fairly good so far as the public reaction is concerned, but bad so far as the Congress organisation is concerned. The old party spirit is rampant and Congressmen work against each other. Daud Ghaznavi, the president, [Punjab PCC] is, I think, a good man and not connected with any party. Dr. Gopichand, while having a strong position among the Hindus, is especially disliked by the non-Hindu groups as well as by the opposite party in the Congress. In the choice of candidates there is a great deal of party feeling involved. For the present the Congress has done very little in the way of big propaganda.^{*} They simply cannot function in a big way. They plead lack of funds also. The main contest for the Muslim seats is between the Muslim League and the Unionist Party, both of whom are spending money on a lavish scale. In spite of this I am sure the Congress will do well in the elections provided a strong line is taken, suitable candidates chosen and financed.

I cannot say definitely in regard to the Muslim candidates whether it will be better in the Punjab to set up direct Congress candidates or allow the Muslim Nationalist Board to set them up on its behalf. But my general impression has been, more especially in the U.P., that the direct Congress appeal goes farthest. Especially in the rural areas in the UP the Congress is popular amongst the Muslims. They have hardly heard of the Jamiat or the Muslim Board. The contest Kazmi¹ *versus* Liaquat Ali² is a close one and on the whole there has been very good work done in it. It is possible that Kazmi might win. If he loses, he will do so by a small number of votes. I was told repeatedly that the Muslim League had got thoroughly frightened there and was distributing money to voters. What effect this will have I do not know.

¹ Muslim nationalist of UP

² Landlord of UP; member of provincial legislature, 1926-39; MLA (Central), 1941 and Deputy leader of Muslim League; Finance Minister in Interim Government formed by Nehru in 1946; Prime Minister of Pakistan after partition

Whatever the results of these Muslim elections, they have had a very good effect on our workers and on the situation generally. We have discovered that there is a very good response among them to our appeal and we have certainly laid the foundations of a favourable drive for the provincial elections. I do hope that, as you said, we shall contest every Muslim seat.

This election tour has been very exhausting and my throat is on the point of giving way. Indira [Mrs. Gandhi] has been ill here but I only come to Allahabad for a day at a time. I am going to Lucknow tomorrow for a meeting of the Executive Council of the PCC. On 1 December I shall probably be in Delhi. When I was in Delhi last I received a letter from Sir Claude Auchinlek,¹ the Commander-in-Chief. It was a friendly letter saying that he desired to meet me and to have a talk with me. He mentioned various dates. In my reply I said I would be glad to meet him and I chose one of his dates—1 December. Since then I have not heard from him again. But I expect I shall have to go. After that of course I shall go to Calcutta where I hope to reach by 5 December.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

PS.

I might add that Colonel Loganathan of the INA (now in Delhi fort) is keen on standing on the Congress ticket for this provincial election. I do not know whether his name is on the Madras list or not. He is an excellent and highly competent man. I wish you would ask the Madras Congress people to find out about his name and if it is there, to put him up.

I want to repeat that the recent election work has been a revelation to Congress workers so far as the Muslim areas are concerned. It is astonishing how good the response has been. How we have neglected these areas! We must contest every seat.

¹ Deputy Chief of General Staff, Army Headquarters, India, 1936-38; C-in-C in India, February to July 1941; Supreme Commander of India-Pakistan forces at time of partition

Bombay
24 November 1945

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thanks for your telegram about your impressions on the Punjab tour. The election is over and I am expecting information about the probable result. Your tour has helped them considerably and I think they will be able to win both the seats. It will clear our way for the provincial elections.

I see that you had to cancel your engagements of the third day because your throat was sorely affected. I hope you are all right now.

Maulana had at last to advance the date of the Working Committee meeting. I had been pressing him all along till you left Poona but he did not yield. At last the Punjab nominations have forced his hands. The date for nominations is 12 December. They are all highly controversial and it may take more than two days for disposal. Perhaps a big crowd will come to Calcutta with complaints.

Unfortunately, the Calcutta situation has been very tense. There has been firing a number of times and several lives have been lost. I do not know whether it will settle down before we reach there. In any case, we are going at a time when the atmosphere will not be helpful for our work. It is unfortunate that the local organisation of the Congress and also the local leadership have not been able to control the students. From all accounts, it appears that the students acted against the advice of the local leaders. This is not a good sign. It does compromise our position and the infection of indiscipline outside is also likely to spread. The students in Bombay tried to follow suit, but the Bombay atmosphere is different and somehow we have managed to settle down.

I do not know where you propose to stay in Calcutta. Babu will be staying at Sodepore [Ashram]. The Working Committee will probably have to meet at Sodepore, which is at a fairly long distance from Calcutta.

If you can find time, it would be better if you can prepare a draft manifesto for the provincial elections, before the meeting of the Working Committee.

I have not heard from you about your proposals for the formation of the two committees about which you talked to me at Poona.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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Bombay
24 December 1945

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have not heard from you after you left Calcutta for Assam. Since you left Calcutta an incident has happened which I think I should bring to your notice. Maulana Sahib told me when I met him before leaving Calcutta on the last day that our discussion in the Working Committee about the appointment of the leader of the Central Assembly Party was such that he did not like it. He said that we all took it for granted that in the absence of Sjt. Bhulabhai [Desai] or Shri Rajaji, Sarat Bose would be the leader. He told [us] that we have all not considered the claim of Asaf Ali. He appears to me to be holding a strong view on this point. Since then I notice that the thing has appeared in the Press also. I am afraid if Maulana persists in his attitude and insists on supporting him there will be trouble in the party from its inception. Up to now Asaf Ali had taken it for granted and had never suggested that he himself would be in the run. The party meeting is to be called in the middle of January at Delhi and the Central Election Board also is to meet at that time. The election of the leader would largely depend upon the free choice of the party. Any pressure from above or from outside will probably be resented and may result in trouble.

I have written to Sri Prakasa¹ inquiring from him as to when he would be able to come to Delhi for the INA office

¹ Educationist, journalist and politician; member, AICC, 1918-45; Secretary, UGCC, 1928-34; General Secretary, Congress, 1929-31; MLA (Central), 1934 and 1945; Member, CA, 1946; Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan, 1947-49; Commerce Minister in Nehru Cabinet; Governor of Assam, Madras and Bombay

work. If you agree, I propose to call the first meeting of that committee also about the middle of January at Delhi.

I do not know whether you have moved in the matter of securing a permit for your going to Burma, Malaya, etc. as per our resolution.

Dr. Bidhan¹ [B. C. Roy] has written to the Government of India for the medical mission, but he has not yet got any reply.

What are your impressions about Assam and what is your further programme? Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Allahabad

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Bombay
29 December 1945

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter which I have received from Sri Prakasa, for your information.

Asaf [Ali] met me on his return from Madras. He has not been able to solve the trouble there. On the contrary the atmosphere is more strained. I am trying to put my head to it and see if anything could be done.

About the question of Assembly leadership, I had a talk with Asaf and he has realised the difficulties of the situation and has agreed to stand aside. Therefore, for the present, the difficulty is solved.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
President
States Peoples' Conference
Udaipur

¹ Congress stalwart in Bengal; VC, Calcutta University, 1942-44, and later President; Jadavpur University; Prime Minister and later Chief Minister, West Bengal

ENCLOSURE

Sevashrama
Benaras
Camp: Ahmedabad
29 December 1945

Dear Sardar Sahib,

I have just received your kind letter of 27 December. You will have received my own letter by now. I came here to see my old friend Shrimati Anasuya Sarabhai¹ who has been ill and I am now going off to Delhi and Benaras. I was arranging to be back in Delhi from Benares by the 15th. I, however, gather from your letter that you are likely to call a meeting of the [Congress] Committee about the 18th. Kindly fix it for that date. I shall surely be there then. I am sorry I cannot come to Bombay. You will please excuse me. I should have been glad if I had a talk with you. I shall be glad to have an extra two days at Benaras as I have to arrange for the election petition that my opponent has filed against me. I wrote to you about the technical point I had made and which was accepted by the Returning Officer. Whether the three judges who will now sit will also accept it, is more than doubtful.

Your kind letter addressed to Benaras re: my appointment as a member of the INA Relief Committee, has also duly reached me here since I wrote my last to you. You will have learnt of the difficulties of the Delhi office. I regret I cannot come to Bombay for I have to hurry on to Benaras now. I am very thankful to you for your kindness and confidence and pray I may prove worthy of the same. Hoping all is well,

With high regards and respects,

Yours sincerely,
Sri Prakasa

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

¹ Member of Sarabhai family; outstanding woman labour leader and social worker of Ahmedabad who helped Gandhi in organising textile labour

Patna
30 September 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Since coming here we have had a meeting of the Provincial Working Committee. A board of 5 members has been constituted for selecting candidates for the Assembly elections. The Government have notified that 29 October is the last date for filing nomination to the Central Assembly and 25 November as polling date. We have got six non-Mohamedan seats and 3 Mohamedan seats and one landholders' seat in the Central Assembly. We cannot set up any candidate for the landholders' seat. We are trying to ascertain the position with regard to the general constituency seats. One thing is being said on all sides and that is that the Hindu Mahasabha will contest most of the general constituency seats, if not all. It is said definitely that the Bhagalpur seat, which is now filled by Babu Kailash Bihari Lal who has to be eliminated by us on account of his conduct in the Assembly, is going to be contested by Kumar Ganga Nand Sinha. Whatever may happen in regard to the other seats, there is bound to be a contest for this one. The Board is going to meet on 5 October by which time we hope we shall be in a position to fix up our candidates for the various general constituency seats.

As regards the Muslim seats it is possible to get at least one of the seats out of three, namely, the Tirhut Division seat from where Maulvi Abdul Gani¹ is a sitting member. But it will involve cost. We have not yet been able to fix up any candidate but we have decided to contest seats and we must be prepared for heavy expenditure. Even in the general constituency seats we may have to incur expenditure, if we insist on our active Congressmen who have suffered and sacrificed being our candidates. The general rank of workers would like to have only this class of candidates and they would expect us to find the funds from somewhere. It would be impossible to raise money in the province. I am therefore in a somewhat awkward corner. I do not

¹ Congress leader of Ludhiana and veteran freedom fighter; refused to migrate to Pakistan; member of Parliament after Independence

know what to do. I will write to you again after the 5th when I hope the situation will be clearer.

I mentioned to you the case of employees of the steel factory at Jamshedpur. A list has been sent to Khurshedben¹ for handing over to you in which the names of persons discharged or dismissed are given. I have come to know that many persons were detained or externed. The company has discharged them on account of their being absent from their duty. Most of these people have now been released or the orders of externment have been withdrawn against them. The company refuses to re-employ them. They have been discharged or dismissed for no fault on their part. The Government made it impossible for them to do their duty. You may recollect that there was a strike in August 1942 which lasted for some days. Many of these people were arrested and detained or externed even before the strike took place. So it can't be said that they participated in the strike. Their absence was due entirely to Government's action but even those who were externed or detained or imprisoned after the strike did nothing against the company. There is no reason why any of them should be discharged or dismissed or otherwise penalised because the Government took action against them. One would expect that a concern like the Tatas² would treat them as on leave with pay and all the privileges of employees during the period of their detention or incarceration and not deprive them of their livelihood on account of their forced absence from duty. But instead of that they are not prepared to re-employ them, even after the Government have withdrawn the order of detention and externment against them. I think you have to take up the matter with the directors at the headquarters. I may inform you that I wrote to Mr. A. Bryant, the Works Manager, about Mr. G. Sethi who has 25 years' service in the factory. He was externed and had therefore to leave Jamshedpur. After the externment order was withdrawn the company refused to re-employ him. I wrote to Mr. Bryant to consider his case and he replied that Sir Ardeshir Dalal, the then Managing Director, and Sir J. Ghandy, the then General Manager of the Works, had decided that he should not be re-employed and he could not therefore re-employ him but he would refer the matter to Sir J. Ghandy after his return from America. Sir J. Ghandy has returned and Mr. Sethi has taken a

¹ Granddaughter of Dadabhai Naoroji and follower of Gandhi

² Premier industrial concern in India and pioneer among entrepreneurs who established steel and other industries in private sector

letter from me for him. I have not yet received any reply, but from the talk I had with Mr. Madan, an employee in a similar position, I gathered in Bombay that Sir J. Ghandy was not inclined to entertain proposals for his re-employment. I asked Mr. Madan to meet you and submit all the details. I do not know if he could see you in Bombay. This Madan is another young man. He is a Parsi. His father was for many years holding one of the highest posts in the company. He came to our movement in the year 1942 and was arrested and detained before the strike in the factory took place. After more than two years' detention he was released but an order of externment was passed and he was prohibited from going to Jamshedpur. He has built a house at Jamshedpur and has got no other house anywhere else. He wrote to the authorities but they did not relax. He disobeyed the externment order and was given one year's imprisonment which he has just served out. There is another Parsi named Dastur who has also similarly disobeyed an externment order which was served after his detention period and was imprisoned. After serving out the sentence he came out and went to Jamshedpur for the second time. They have again convicted him for disobeying the order. There are other cases also in which there has been no disobedience of Government orders but absence from the factory in obedience to Government orders. The company treats all these cases alike and discharges them. I am thinking of going round on a tour and may visit Jamshedpur also. I should like that this matter may be settled before I go there otherwise there may be trouble. The workers there resent this kind of action. There are other grievances also which are becoming acute and if any trouble arises after my visit or during my visit I should be in an awkward position. I would therefore suggest that you might take up the matter there and settle it before I go. I may be going there in the third or fourth week of October. If by any chance Madan has left his address with you please let me have it.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Poona
5 October 1945

My dear Rajen Babu,

I have received your letter of 30 September today.

So far as the Central Assembly elections are concerned it would not be possible to arrange any financial help from the Centre. I am still confined in the clinic and before these elections are over I may not be able to leave this place. It was therefore that I informed everybody who met me in Bombay that for the Central Assembly elections the provinces will have to make their own arrangements.

I do not think there will be any severe contest in this election in any province except in the Muslim constituencies in places where we or the Independent Muslims would contest the [Muslim] League. The nomination dates being very near you must fix up the proposals as early as possible so that the selections may be made in time.

About the factory employees at Jamshedpur, I will make an effort when I get the list from you, but I am afraid we will not be listened to so long as we are in the wilderness. It is too much to expect from the Tatas also that they would treat their labour differently.

I do not know why you are going to Calcutta at present. I hope you are keeping fit.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat
Patna
1 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbbhai,

I wrote to you a long letter yesterday about provincial matters. In this I am going to confine myself to Bombay. When I was there I met some friends among whom was Professor K.T. Shah. You know he was the president of a committee appointed by the Congress Government of Bihar of which I was a member. I came in somewhat intimate contact with him then and our relation has been very friendly. I had heard something against him but my contact with him has not disclosed anything which could repel me. On the other hand I have been much impressed by the many qualities in him. I say all this because I want to write something with which he is concerned.

He mentioned to me the name of a Muslim friend whom we could take as a Congress candidate for the Bombay Assembly. He gave me a letter from him which I am enclosing. It speaks for itself. It seems to me that he would be quite a suitable Congress candidate from our point of view. He is cultured and educated. He holds a very high position in the Khoja¹ community. He is well to do and will not only meet his own expenses but might also contribute something towards the election expenses of other candidates. I would, therefore, recommend his case to you. You will of course find out for yourself all about him.

Dr. Deshmukh² has not proved a very satisfactory Congress member in the Central Assembly and I imagine you would like to put up somebody else in his place from Bombay. I believe there are two seats and you have to put up one Maharashtrian and one Gujarati for the two seats. Could we take Professor K.T. Shah for one of the seats? For ability and capacity for work he cannot be beaten by any one else. He has not been

¹ Muslim sect found mainly in Gujarat and prominent in trade and industry in Bombay. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, first Governor-General of Pakistan, was a Khoja.

² A leading surgeon of Bombay

a jail-going Congressman but he is a strong nationalist and can be depended upon if he signs our pledge to stick to it. I would therefore recommend him also.

There is also another name for the Provincial Assembly of Bombay about which I need not say much. There is the name of Dr. Jivraj Mehta.¹ I have mentioned these names so that you may keep them in mind and consider them when the time comes.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

88

Poona
6 October 1945

Dear Rajen Babu,

I have received your letter of the 1st instant today which means that it has taken five days for your letter to reach Poona from Patna. The reason for the delay seems to be that the address you have put is wrong as you will see from the enclosure. Instead of Poona you have addressed it to Bombay.

Regarding your suggestions about Prof. Shah and Dr. Jivraj Mehta, we shall consider the same when the proposals are received from the Bombay Congress Committee. There is a suggestion that a Parsi candidate should be selected and that would leave only one seat for Bombay which may go to a Maharashtrian. The Parsis would find no place in the Central Assembly except from Bombay. As Sir Cowasji Jehangir² will not probably stand this time no Parsi who is not given a ticket by the Congress stands any chance, but this will depend upon the attitude of the Bombay Congress Committee.

I have received the enclosed letter from Mr. Fazalbhoy sent to you by Prof. Shah. I have read the letter and I find that he

¹ Physician and Congress leader of Baroda; Director-General, Health Services, 1948-49; Minister in Bombay, 1949-60; Chief Minister, Gujarat, 1960-63; Indian High Commissioner in London, 1963-67

² Parsi industrialist and baronet of Bombay; member, Executive Council (Bombay), 1921-22 and 1923-28; elected to Central Assembly from Bombay, 1930; President, Liberal Federation, 1936

wants to stand as an independent candidate and not on the Congress ticket. You write in your letter that we could take him as a Congress candidate for the Bombay Assembly and you recommend his case to me for consideration. He does not say that he wants to stand on the Congress ticket. There is some inconsistency which I am unable to explain. Probably Prof. Shah in his letter must have written to you that he is willing to stand on the Congress ticket. If he is standing as an independent candidate we have nothing to do in the matter unless he suggests a way in which we can help him.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Patna

89

P.O. Zeradai (Saran)
12 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have your letter. I regret that by mistake the address was wrongly put which delayed the letter.

I would write to you finally about the Central Assembly nominations on the 19th from Patna where we have a meeting of the Election Board on that date.

I was under the impression that Shri Khurshedben would have given you the list of Jamshedpur employees as they had sent the list to her and me a copy of it. On my return to Patna I may be able to send it to you. Such cases have arisen with the Steam Navigation Company also whose steamers ply in Bihar rivers. I do not know what we can do to help the people who have thus been thrown out of employment.

As regards Fazalbhoj, Professor K.T. Shah had spoken to me and given me the letter which I had sent you. It may be that I was under a wrong impression. Now we have to await further developments and I will let you know if there is anything further to be done about him.

The inability of the Central Board to help with funds in Central Assembly elections places great difficulty in our way. I will discuss the matter with our people on the 19th and do what

we can. I have sent you a preliminary report about the candidates. As stated above, I will send the final one on the 19th.

I wonder if you require any additional hand in your office. If so, I might suggest the name of Shri R. K. L. Nandkeoleyar who is in the AICC office. He belongs to Gaya, has a British M.A. degree and was a barrister and has been with us since 1921. He was put in charge of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee in 1940-41 by Bapu and did good work there. He was in jail during the movement. I apprehend that [J.B.] Kripalaniji may not like my writing to you over his head; so if you require his service get him from Kripalaniji and do not let him know that I have made the suggestion.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

90

Poona
15 October 1945

My dear Rajen Babu,

I have received your letter of the 12th instant.

I have fixed a meeting here on the 21st for the final selection of candidates for the Central Assembly, but you say that you will send your report on the 19th. It will not reach us here on the day of the meeting unless you post it in time. But I would suggest that the proposals should be communicated to me by telegram.

I have received the preliminary report which you had sent. Will you give me some idea of the financial assistance you will require so as to relieve you of your difficulty about the Central Assembly elections? I may make some efforts in that direction when I go to Bombay by the end of this month.

Are there any non-League candidates opposing the Muslim League candidates for the Central Assembly? How many Muslim seats are there from your province in the Centre? Give me some idea of the composition in the constituencies.

I know Nandkeoleyar as I had seen him several times at Wardha when he was there with the Secretary of the AICC. I think I saw him at Simla also. Jawaharal has written to me

about Sjt. Dharam Yash Dev who was also in the Central Office for some time for propaganda work. He met me in Bombay, but I cannot decide this matter till I go to Bombay. I have sent you a wire today about our meeting on the 21st. If you can come it would be very good, but I do not expect that anybody except Dr. Pattabhi [Sitaramayya]¹ and Shankarrao Deo will come here. However, I must do my best.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

91

Poona
8 October 1945

My dear Rajen Babu,

I have received your letter of the 5th instant.

I do not think that the Hindu Mahasabha can get any seat except in Bengal. It has no strength in any other province. I do not know anything about Bihar, but after having shown so much strength in the present struggle I do not doubt that Bihar can render a very good account of itself in the elections. My view is that excepting Syama Prasad there is hardly any man whom we can accept and sacrifice our seat instead. It would not be wise to lose both ways. On the side the League is attacking us and we have to rely largely upon our strength in non-Muslim constituencies. We cannot afford to surrender without cause any of the seats which we can easily secure. If in an individual case we find that the Hindu Mahasabha has a 50 per cent chance against the Congress we can settle with them and allow them that seat. But I personally feel that there will be no such case in the whole of India. We may however consider this question when we meet next time.

Gandhiji has received a complaint from one Ramsnehi Singh, Congress worker of Ramnagar Thana in Champaran district, making a vigorous attack against Bepin Vihari Varma's selection for the Assembly, which has been handed to me. It is alleged that he had opposed the movement.

¹ Congress leader of Andhra; joined party in 1916; member, AICC and Congress Working Committee; Congress President, Jaipur session, 1948-50; President, All-India States Peoples' Conference, 1936 and again 1946-48; member, CA, 1946-50; last assignment Governor of MP

When will your Provincial Congress Committee finally send its proposals for the Central Assembly?

You had written to me about Dr. Jivraj and he himself had come to me for that purpose, but it appears that he is not a voter and therefore cannot stand.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Patna

92

Poona
10 October 1945

My dear Rajen Babu,

In continuation of my last letter I wish to inform you that I showed your letter of the 5th instant to Bapu. He says that we can have no objection to meet Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee at any time he desires to do so. But his proposal to have a certain number of representatives in the so-called Constituent Assembly is unthinkable because, if not for anything else, at least for its being too premature. Nobody knows whether the Constituent Assembly is going to come into being from these elections, much less do we know its nature to decide in advance whether we shall be in a position to accept it. These things cannot be considered unless we have a full and clear picture before us. I entirely agree with him in this view.

Today's papers announce that Sarat Babu is going to contest for the Central Assembly from Calcutta. He also told me so when he came here.

I am enclosing herewith a report I have received from the Secretary of the Kerala PCC. There are three candidates for the Central Assembly. The last is not worth considering. Between the first and the second, the first one seems to have a very good record and is also a lawyer. The second one is anxious to secure our support but in comparative merits the first one appears to be superior. Please communicate to me your opinion as early as possible.

KPCC affairs are in a bad way. It was dominated by the Communists. The president who was a Communist has joined the Muslim League and a large majority of the Communists who

formed the bulk of the Congress Committee have been expelled or have resigned. They have all decided to support the Muslim League. Under the circumstances we have to rely on the report of the secretary. There is no other proper person to consult. We will have to depend largely upon Dr. Pattabhi's guidance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

93

Poona
15 October 1945

My dear Rajen Babu,

Mr. Madan's letter was received by me yesterday and I have written to the chairman of the steel company, Mr. J.R.D. Tata, about the affair. When his reply is received I will communicate to you what he has to say in the matter. I have also spoken to Mr. M. R. Masani¹ about it. He is in their employ and he has agreed to communicate my views to the chairman. I have spoken to him rather strongly about the matter. Personally, I think that these people will have to wait till we get back to power but I will try my best to see whether they could be reinstated now.

The nomination dates for the Central Assembly are drawing near. I have not yet received any recommendations except from Kerala, which has been circulated among the members of the Board. The process of circulation and receiving of replies is a very dilatory one and I am afraid it would be difficult to dispose of these applications in time if I have to wait for the replies from the members. Nor do I see any possibility of the members coming here if I were to call a meeting. Under the circumstances I see no way out but to give my decision according to my own judgment and to inform the members of the committee accordingly. If you suggest any other way I shall be glad to accept it. I am afraid we will get many complaints from many provinces, particularly from the Punjab, Madras, Bengal, Nagpur and Berar.

¹ Founder and joint secretary of Congress Socialist party, 1934-39; Mayor of Bombay, 1943-44; member, Central Assembly, 1945-47; member, CA, 1947-48; Ambassador to Brazil, 1948-49; Founder-member and later President of Swatantra Party

That cannot be helped. I have kept a meeting of our committee on the 21st. If you can come it would be very helpful.

I have received a draft manifesto from Jawaharlal and after it is scrutinised by Bapu I will send it on to you as well as to other members. It is intended for the Central Assembly elections only. I have not yet received the final proposals from your province.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

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TELEGRAM

Poona
17 October 1945

Doctor Rajendraprasad,
Dighaghat
Patna

YOUR WIRE. NEED NOT COME IF INCONVENIENT.

VALLABHBHAI

95

Patna
19 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have sent the following telegram today which I confirm hereby:

Sardar Patel
Nature Clinic
Poona

PROVINCIAL ELECTION BOARD UNANIMOUSLY RECOMMENDS SATYANARYAN [Sinha] BIPINBIHARI VARMA RAMAYAN PRASAD GOURISHANKAR SARAN SINHA BENARSIPRASAD JIUNJHUNWALA RAMNARAYAN SINHA FOR CENTRAL ASSEMBLY NONMUSLIM CONSTITUENCIES. COMMUNICATING LATER ABOUT MUSLIM SEATS. FINANCIAL HELP NEEDED PARTICULARLY FOR CHHOTA-NAGPUR SEATS AND MUSLIM SEATS. WRITING.

The constituencies for which the names are suggested are given below:

Satyanarayan Sinha	Saran-cum-Darbhanga
Bipinbihari Varma	Champaran-cum-Muzaffarpur
Ramayan Prasad	Shahabad-cum-Patna
Gourishankar Saran	Gaya-cum-Monghyr
Sinha	
Benarasiprasad Jhun-	Bhagalpur-cum-Purnea-cum-
jhunwala	Santhal Parganas
Ramnarayan Sinha	Chhotanagpur Division

After considering all the other names the Board decided to stick to its previous decision which I had communicated to you. As regards Shri Bipinbihari Varma we are assured by the workers there that there is no substance in the complaint of Ramsnehi Singh. As a matter of fact we are told there is no Congress worker of that name in that thana. There is one man of that name who is in service of the Harinagar Sugar Mill as propaganda officer but he is not regarded as a Congress worker there.

I must inform you that in the Chhotanagpur constituency the contest is likely to be serious as we understand that the Raja of Ramgarh is going to stand. He is very rich and owns practically the whole of district of Hazaribagh as his zamindari. Although Babu Ramnarayan Sinha will be a strong candidate, propaganda will be expensive as five districts will have to be covered. The Muslim seats will be particularly expensive as two of them cover two divisions and the third covers two divisions and the province of Orissa, in one constituency. We are trying to ascertain the position regarding the Muslim seats. Even if it is found necessary only to help Muslim candidates set up on behalf of the Board of the Muslim nationalist¹ parties, they will require financial help. I am raising funds for helping sufferers and it will not be possible to raise funds for election also. I have therefore to depend on you and we shall not require less than Rs. 25,000 from you, if there is a contest and if we have to help in Muslim constituencies also.

As regards the landholders' seat the provincial board would nominate Babu Chakreshwar Prasad Jain. You may sanction his nomination but leave it to us to publish it or not as we consider necessary.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

¹ Small committee of nationalist Muslims who helped Muslim candidates in elections on condition they would not join any communal organisation

PS.

With reference to your letter dated 10 October enclosing the report of the Secretary, Kerala Provincial Congress Committee I am of the opinion that Shri A. Kurunakara Menon should be nominated as a Congress candidate for the Central Assembly for the West Coast-cum-Nilgiris constituency.

Rajendra Prasad

96

Poona

22 October 1945

Dear Friend,

Your recommendations of:

- | Name | Constituency |
|----------------------------------|--|
| (1) Babu Satyanarayan Sinha | from Darbhanga-Saran |
| (2) Babu Bipin Bihari Varma | from Muzaffarpur-Champaran |
| (3) Babu Ram Narayan Prasad | from Patna-Shahabad |
| (4) Babu Gourishankar Sinha | from Gaya-Monghyr |
| (5) Babu Benarasidas Jhunjunwala | from Bhagalpur-Purnea-Santhal Parganas |
| (6) Babu Ramnarain Sinha | from Chhotanagpur Division |
| (7) Chakreshwar Prasad Jain | from Landholders |

as Congress nominees for the Central Assembly elections have been approved and you may inform the candidates accordingly. We hope the Congress will come out victorious with a thumping majority in all these constituencies.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Secretary
Bihar Prov. Congress Committee
Patna



WITH ELDER BROTHER VITHAIBHAI LEFT



THREE GENERATIONS: VALLABHBHAI SEATED WITH GRANDSON GAUTAM ON LAP, SON DAHYABHAI

Poona
23 October 1945

My dear Rajen Babu,

I have received your letter of the 19th instant.

Our Board met here on the 21st and 22nd. Shankarrao Deo and Dr. Pattabhi attended. Others did not come. We have disposed of all the selections except those from Punjab and Bengal. You must have seen the report in the Press. The Punjab proposals will be discussed tomorrow when the president of the provincial committee comes here. I have already circulated his proposals which you must have received. The time being very short, we have to take a decision without waiting for opinions from the other members of the Board.

About the landholders' constituency, your proposal to nominate Babu Chakreshwar Kumar Jain has been sanctioned, but we have not yet published it as desired by you. You may publish it at your convenience and inform me.

As soon as the nominations are filed you will be able to know about the contest and I will expect you to inform me about it.

I should like to know the exact position about the Muslim constituencies, and whether the Congress is going to contest any seat. Are there any independent Muslims contesting? How many Muslim seats are there and who are the League candidates? Please give me a full picture of it all.

I am going tomorrow to Bombay for about a week and will be returning here on or about 1 November.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

29 December 1945

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Asaf Ali met me on his return from Madras and I had a talk with him about the leadership of the Assembly Party. He has agreed to stand aside, as he has realised the difficulties. So I hope there will be no more trouble.

I am awaiting a report from you about the result of your discussions with the different Muslim groups in your province in connection with the Assembly elections.

Please ask Babu Satyanarayan Sinha to go to Jamshedpur for a day and see Sir Jhangir Ghandy¹ about the matter which was discussed between the two at Calcutta. He had agreed to take back those two people and it seems there has been some difficulty. Mr. J.R.D. Tata² is not here but as soon as he returns to Bombay, I will take up the matter with him.

I want to know what is all the trouble about the students in your province.

It seems there has been wire-pulling in all the provinces by the socialist group, who want to canvass support and divide the students on party lines again. This will again create difficulties amongst students.

What are your impressions about Pandit Jawaharlal's tour in your province?

I hope your health has improved.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Patna

¹ Director of Tata steel works in Jamshedpur

² Head of Tata industrial house

Poona
5 October 1945

My dear Asaf Ali,

About a week ago I gave a note [for] you to Syt. Biswanath Das¹ of Orissa in connection with the removal of his disqualification. He must have seen you by this time. Have you been able to do anything in that matter?

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a telegram I have received from Sind. This is another case of disqualification. There are several cases of this type in different provinces. Would it be possible for you to approach either the Private Secretary [to the Viceroy] or the Home Secretary and get uniform instructions for the removal of disqualifications issued in all the provinces?

Please let me know briefly what happened at Delhi in the meeting of the various Nationalist Muslim organisations held in Delhi recently when Maulana Sahib was there.

I hope you are keeping fit.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Asaf Ali, Esq
Delhi

ENCLOSURE
TELEGRAM

Karachi
3 October 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

WORKING COMMITTEE URGED GOVT. REMOVAL DISQUALIFICATION OF CONGRESSMEN
CONVICTED OVER TWO YEARS. NOW GOVERNOR SIND HAS ACTUALLY REFUSED
REMOVAL MY DISQUALIFICATION AS I WAS CONVICTED OVER TWO YEARS IN
AUGUST 1942 UNDER 34 AND 38 DEFENCE INDIA RULES THUS ACTING AGAINST FREE

¹ Congress leader of Orissa; elected to provincial legislature, 1920; Premier of Orissa, 1937-39; Congress member of CA; later Governor of UP; Chief Minister of Orissa, 1971-72

FAIR ELECTIONS. KINDLY ISSUE PRESS STATEMENT URGING VICEROY TO INTER-
VENE. SIND GOVERNORS ATTITUDE ANTI-CONGRESS AND AUTOCRATIC.

MADHAVDAS SHIVALOMAL, PRESIDENT COMMITTEE JACOBABAD, MEMBER PROVINCIAL
COMMITTEE CARE WISE POLICY.

100

Poona

18 October 1945

My dear Asaf Ali,

I have wired to the Delhi Congress Committee to open your election campaign. My efforts in Bombay, as desired by you, did not succeed and therefore I sent you a wire this morning as under:

"TRIED HARD. SHE DOES NOT AGREE. BASID NOT AVAILABLE. REGRET."

Yesterday I received your telegram about your inability to come on the 21st, but you suggested that you would be able to come on the 22nd. It is possible to hold over the meeting but whether you would be able to come on the 22nd or not it is for you to decide. Your presence will certainly be helpful, but if it is very inconvenient you need not come provided that you have full confidence in my judgment in the matter of selection. The time at our disposal being very short, it is not possible to wait.

I have received your letter along with a copy of the telegram from Sjt. Brijlal Nehru. He had sent a wire to me also and I am awaiting the proposals from the Punjab.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Asaf Ali, Esq
Delhi

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Poona

19 October 1945

My dear Asaf Ali,

I have your telegram of today. The Punjab recommendations have not yet been received. I do not know why Brijlal Nehru has withdrawn. I will keep in mind your recommendation about Thakurdas Bhargava.¹

¹ Congress leader of Punjab; elder brother of Dr. Gopichand Bhargava

About Rajaji [C. Rajagopalachari], I can do nothing unless his mind is known. As far as I know his heart is in the province. The Madras Congress Committee have already sent their proposals. Of course they have not sent Rajaji's name as he has expressed no desire in that direction. It is impossible for me to act on my own initiative in this matter. I would have taken the risk if I had known that he is inclined to go to the Centre.

About Sjt. Bhulabhai [Desai], I have already written to you. The Gujarat constituency from where he was returned last time has sent only one name, i.e. of Mr. [G.V.] Mavalankar.¹ In Bombay there are two seats for which they have recommended Mr. M. R. Masani and Dr. Deshmukh. Hence there is now no other place for him. You don't know the conditions in Bombay. We have got four applications of which the one of Dr. Jivraj is not to be considered because he is not a voter. Another one is a municipal servant or someone who is not worth considering. Therefore, there were only two left and we had no choice. Masani is a fairly good candidate. About Dr. Deshmukh I can say that there is no one who can take his place amongst the large Deccani population in Bombay. They have got the largest number of votes in that constituency and they cannot be ignored. A Deccani [Konkani] candidate has got to be selected and the Bombay Congress Committee tried its utmost to find a better one, but they failed. [S.K.] Patil alone can succeed, but the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee cannot afford to lose him. He is the soul of that committee. Besides, he has got other responsibilities in Bombay. Therefore, as a last resort we had to fall back upon Dr. Deshmukh. In spite of his faults he is a good fighter and is a sport also. This time he will behave all right and so you need not be anxious about him on this score.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Asaf Ali Esq.
Delhi

¹ General Secretary, 36th Indian National Congress, Ahmedabad, 1921; Speaker, Bombay Assembly; President, Central Assembly, 1946-52; first Speaker of Lok Sabha

To

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
Mr. Asaf Ali

Poona

20 October 1945

My dear,

I am enclosing herewith the proposals of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee for the Central Assembly received today. Subsequently in the afternoon I received a telegram from Maulana Daud Ghaznavi, which is also copied below the proposals. There is only a week left now because the final date for nominations is 29th, and I must communicate our decision in time so that there may be no delay.

Regarding the first proposal, Sardar Kapoor Singh is the proper candidate and likely to succeed.

Regarding the second proposal, Sardar Sardul Singh's¹ past makes it difficult for us to accept him. I do not mean his political career but his denial of his own handwriting about the promissory note given by him to [Maharaja of] Nabha.² The decree passed against him and the strictures passed by the High Court resulted in his being asked to resign from the Working Committee. How can we now accept him as a member of the Central Assembly?

Regarding the third proposal, Babu Thakurdas Bhargava will be the best candidate. Mr. Asaf Ali has also strongly recommended his name.

Regarding the fourth proposal, Lala Hans Raj cannot be replaced and the committee's recommendation is also unanimous. Sjt. Brijlal Nehru has withdrawn his application.

Regarding the fifth, I am afraid Diwan Chamanlal will have to be persuaded in case we do not want to lose the seat.

I have wired today to Maulana Ghaznavi to come here for consultation before final sanction.

¹ Sikh Congress leader of Punjab; for several years member of CWC

² Deposed for alleged sympathy with extremist politicians

Please communicate your suggestions, if any, by telegram. Otherwise, I will have to dispose of the proposals in the best manner possible.

The provinces have been very dilatory in submitting their proposals. The Sind proposals have not yet been received.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

PS.

I am also enclosing herewith two statements:

1. showing the names of candidates approved by me on behalf of the Board.
2. unanimous recommendations received so far.

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Poona

10 October 1945

My dear Kripalani,

I am enclosing herewith a report on the proposals for nomination to the Central Assembly from the secretary of the Kerala PCC. There are three candidates for the Central Assembly. The last is not worth considering. Between the first and the second, the first one seems to have a very good record and is also a lawyer. The second one is anxious to secure our support but on comparative merits the first one appears to be superior. Please communicate to me your opinion as early as possible.

KPCC affairs are in a bad way. It was dominated by the Communists. The president who was a Communist has joined the Muslim League and a large majority of the Communists who formed the bulk of the Congress committees have been expelled or have resigned. They have all decided to support the Muslim League. Under the circumstances we have to rely on the report of the secretary. There is no other proper person to consult. We will have to depend largely upon Dr. Pattabhi's guidance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Acharya J. B. Kripalani
Allahabad

All India Congress Committee
Swaraj Bhawan
Allahabad
15 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

It is good of you to have asked my opinion about the Kerala candidates for the Central Assembly. But I do not know in what capacity I can give my opinion. I had wanted my position with regard to the important committees formed out of the members of the Working Committee to be made clear. I wanted a decision of the Working Committee on the general question. Till that general question was decided I had declined the kind offer of the President to be on the Central Parliamentary Board. I therefore do not think that I am competent to give my opinion about the merits of the Kerala candidates, as a member of your committee. I hope you will not misunderstand in any way the position I have taken.

Unofficially of course I agree with you that the first candidate, considering the facts as given by the Kerala secretary, deserves preference.

I hope the treatment there is having a desirable effect. Please keep me in touch with your programme.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
J. B. Kripalani

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
68 Marine Drive
Bombay

EXTRACTS

Nationalist Christian Party
C/o Anglo Lusitano
15 Bank Street, Fort
Bombay
10 October 1945

Dear Sardar Sahib,

Now that the elections to the Central Assembly are fast approaching, I take the liberty of addressing you this letter.

You are well aware that Christians come in the general constituency for the Central Assembly. In view of their small numbers on the electoral roll, there is absolutely no chance for any Christian to stand independently and get himself elected.

May I, therefore, be permitted to suggest that when the Congress considers applications for the Central Assembly Christians are also put up on the Congress ticket?

Thanking you, and with respectful pranams,

Yours sincerely,
F. M. Pinto

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

Poona
12 October 1945

Dear Mr. Pinto,

I have received your letter of the 10th instant.

Mr. B. S. Gilani of the Punjab is in correspondence with me on the subject. It is not easy for any Christian candidate to succeed in any constituency for the Central Assembly even with Congress backing, and we cannot afford to lose a seat in these elections at the present critical juncture. If it is possible in any place without risk of losing the seat to run a Christian candidate, the province where it is possible will certainly do so.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur is here and she does not desire to stand for the Assembly. Dr. D'Silva has no chance in Jubbulpore. Mr. Gilani does not intend to do so. I do not know the exact position about the other candidates. I will make enquiries.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

F. M. Pinto, Esq.
Bombay

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TELEGRAM

Bombay
11 October 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai
Poona

GLAD TO INFORM YOU NATIONAL GROUP MEETING RESOLVED QUOTE
SUPPORTS CANDIDATURE OF MANU SUBEDAR WHO SEEKS REELEC-
TION UNQUOTE

MANU SUBEDAR

108

Poona
12 October 1945

My dear Manubhai,
Thanks for your telegram.

I am glad the National Group has taken the correct decision.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Manu Subedar
Bombay

Belgaum,
16 October 1945

My dear Sardar,

I am herewith forwarding Sjt Kunte's¹ letter to you for disposal. He desires that a representative from Alibag district should be nominated this time for the Central Assembly. Last time Karnatak had the chance.

While in Bombay I brought the resolution passed by the District Congress Committee of Alibag in this connection to the notice of Sjt. [R.R.] Diwakar.² He gave me to understand that the D.Cs of Ratnagiri and Alibag would be consulted before nominations are recommended to you.

After my arrival here I was sorry to learn that the question has assumed a communal turn.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Gangadhar Rao Deshpande

Poona
18 October 1945

My dear Gangadhar Rao,

I have received your letter of the 16th inst. Karnatak province having a large number of votes in that constituency, it has a right to have its own candidate. Alibag district can have a seat in that constituency if Karnatak province agrees to have one from there, not otherwise. But the decision taken by the KPCC³ having the support of the MPCC, nothing can be done

¹ Congressman of Bombay; later Speaker of Bombay Assembly

² Joined non-co-operation movement in 1921; Secretary and later President of Karnatak PCC; pioneered movement for separate Karnatak State; AICC member for several years; member, CA; Central Minister, 1948-52; Governor of Bihar, 1952-57; President, Gandhi Peace Foundation

³ Karnatak Pradesh Congress Committee

for the applicant referred to in your letter. Please inform him accordingly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Gangadhar Rao Deshpande
Belgaum

111

Poona
17 October 1945

My dear Patil,

I have just received a telegram from one Mr. Madhukar Rajadhyaksha which is quoted below:

SELECTION DOCTOR DESHMUKH STRONGLY RESENTED BY DADAR PUBLIC.
LETTER FOLLOWS.

You may enquire about it and let me know if the man is of any consequence. If you think it necessary you may communicate this telegram to Dr. Deshmukh also.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri S.K. Patil
381 Sandhurst Road
Bombay

112

EXTRACTS

Esplanade House
Fort
Bombay
19 October 1945

My dear Sardarji,

The main criticism, as you are aware, is levelled against Dr. Deshmukh's nomination. He is a great personal friend of mine and we have known each other for five and thirty years. There is no doubt however that he has during the last five or six years often committed the unpardonable blunder of going

directly against the wishes of the Congress leaders, either in the Assembly or outside it.

Regarding Masani, although his selection cannot be criticised as severely as Deshmukh's, I believe a better man should have been chosen. Masani has openly declared the severance of his connection with politics and he has resigned his membership of the Congress Socialist Party.

I remain,
Yours obediently and
gratefully,
Jamnadas Dwarkadas

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

113

Poona
• 23 October 1945

My dear Jamnadas,

I have received your letter of the 19th inst. I am coming to Bombay tomorrow and shall be staying there for about a week. If you will meet me there some day during the week I shall be able to explain to you that the decision taken by us was inevitable under the circumstances and there is nothing to regret about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Jamnadas Dwarkadas
Bombay

114

Poona
19 October 1945

My dear Morarji,¹

Your recommendation for the selection of Sjt. G. V. Mavalankar as Congress candidate for the Central Assembly is hereby

¹ PCS, Bombay, 1918; resigned in 1930 to join civil disobedience movement; Minister, Bombay Government, 1937-39; Home Minister, 1946-52; Chief Minister, 1952-56; thereafter Central Minister of Commerce and Industry and later Finance, resigned under Kamaraj Plan, 1963; Deputy Prime Minister in Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Cabinet, 1967-69

approved and the order may be communicated to him. I hope there will be no contest.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Morarji Desai
C/o Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee
Ahmedabad

115

Poona
19 October 1945

Dear Friend,

Your recommendation for the selection of Sjt. N. V. Gadgil¹ and Sjt. B. S. Hirey² as Congress candidates in the Central Division (seven districts) is hereby approved. They are authorised to stand on the Congress ticket for the Central Assembly. Please inform these two candidates accordingly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Secretary
Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee
Poona

116

Poona
22 October 1945

Dear Friend,

Your recommendations of:

	Name	Constituency.
1.	Dr. G. V. Deshmukh	from Bombay city
2.	Shri M. R. Masani	„ -do-
3.	Shri Manu Subedar	„ Indian Merchants' Chamber,

¹ Secretary and later President of Congress Committee, Poona, MLA (Central), 1934; party whip in Central Legislative Assembly; joined Nehru Cabinet in August 1947; Governor of Punjab

² Congressman of long standing and member, CWC; President, MPCC, 1948-52; Minister in Bombay Government, 1952-56

as Congress candidates for the Central Assembly elections have been approved and you may inform the candidates accordingly. We hope the Congress will come out victorious with a thumping majority in all these constituencies.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Secretary
Bombay Provincial Congress Committee
Bombay

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TELEGRAM

Ahmedabad
23 October 1945

Sardar Patel
Poona

VADIBHAI PLEDGE POSTED TO SHANTILAL BOMBAY.

LALAKAKA

118

TELEGRAM

Poona
24 October 1945

Lalakaka
Secretary Congress
Ahmedabad

YOUR WIRE. VADILAL'S NOMINATION APPROVED

VALLABHBHAI

119

7 Altamont Road
Bombay
6 November 1945

Dear Sardar Sahib,

Pardiwala¹ tells me that as a result of my talk with you when you were here, I left you with the impression that I thought

¹ Advocate of Bombay High Court with Congress sympathies

I was conferring an obligation on the Congress by accepting nomination for the Assembly and also that I had expected you or the Central Election Board to help financially in the campaign.

I don't know how I could have given you such an impression. I can only assure you that I am by no means insensible of the honour it is to be the standard-bearer of the Congress in this or any other sphere of activity. Indeed, I consider it a privilege.

As regards finance, I was only trying to make the point that in this contest we should place the emphasis on mobilising the idealism and the undoubted strength of sentiment for the Congress and not depend on a larger number of paid workers or a fleet of taxis. A certain amount of expense is of course inevitable and I thought, and still think, that the amount mentioned in the note I left with you on that occasion was quite adequate. There was, therefore, no need, in my view, for any contribution from outside. I can assure you that the interests and prestige of the Congress come first with me also and, so as not to leave any room for the thought in your mind or in any other quarter that the Congress interest may in any the slightest way be adversely affected, I have told [S.K.] Patil this morning that any expenditure the BPCC thinks necessary will be undertaken, even though it may go beyond the limit mentioned by me. I hope this will remove any uneasiness that may be left in your mind.

You will be glad to know that everything is being done jointly and in fullest co-operation between Patil and ourselves. Paradoxically enough, our difficulty in getting a high poll is likely to be caused by the weakness of the other candidate through people not taking the election too seriously! But we shall do everything possible to counter this.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
M. R. Masani

120

Poona
7 November 1945

My dear Masani,

I have received your letter of yesterday.

If matters have been arranged satisfactorily I have nothing to say. You told me definitely that in other countries parties

bear the cost of candidates and when you gave me your nomination you were under the same impression. You also said that you did not know that you will have to spend money for this election and if you had known, perhaps you would have kept out. These statements of yours gave me the impression referred to in your letter and I spoke to Pardiwala and Syt. Purushottam about it. I was in a hurry to return here and I had no time to call you again. So I asked them to speak to you about it. I am glad things have been settled to your satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri M.R. Masani
7 Altamont Road
Bombay

121

Belgaum
8 November 1945

My dear Sardar,

Mr. Jagtap¹ saw me again yesterday. He relies more on the assurances of Kambli and others in Dharwar and Bijapur districts. My own calculation is that his chances are very poor. But if Kambli is really serious our friends in Dharwar and Bijapur will have to be more active.

Mr. Jagtap said he would meet you in Poona. You may be knowing that he is the owner of the buildings occupied by Dr. Dinsha of Nature Clinic.

I am not still hopeful about Inamdari constituency. Messrs Latthe² and Poddar are doing their best. I am also doing whatever is possible.

Wishing you health,

Yours sincerely,
Gangadhar Deshpande

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

¹ Title-holder of British days; retired in 1942; wanted to contest elections in 1945 with support of his Maratha followers

² Prominent Congress worker of Maharashtra; became Dewan of Kolhapur and later Finance Minister in Kher Ministry in Bombay

Poona
10 November 1945

My dear Gangadhar Rao,

I have received your letter of the 8th instant. Diwan Bahadur Jagtap has asked for an appointment and he will meet me tomorrow morning. Even if he stands he has no chance. He has also seen Balasaheb Kher¹ in Bombay.

About Mr. Tulpule's² constituency you may do your best. I am not so [diffident] about it from the reports received from other parts of the constituency.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Gangadhar Rao Deshpande
Belgaum

PS.

D. B. Jagtap met me today. He is standing and expects to be supported by the Hindu Sabha and the Lingayat group³ of Kampli.

¹ B. G. Kher, popularly known as Balasaheb Kher; solicitor; entered politics in 1922; Secretary of Swaraj Party and of Bardoli Satyagraha Inquiry Committee; emerged on national scene in 1937 when Sardar Patel selected him in preference to K. F. Nariman as leader, Bombay Legislature Congress party; became first Premier of Bombay; High Commissioner in London

² Member, Bombay Assembly, from Poona

³ Influential caste in Mysore State

CHAPTER III
COMPLICATIONS IN PROVINCES

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TELEGRAM

Poona

15 October 1945

Aligulkhan

President

Congress Committee

Peshawar

Mehrchand Khanna

Care Congress Committee

Peshawar

NO PROPOSALS ABOUT CENTRAL ASSEMBLY CONGRESS CANDIDATES
RECEIVED. WIRE IMMEDIATELY.

VALLABHBHAI

124

Poona

16 October 1945

My dear Kripalani,

Yesterday Bapu showed me your letter about the proposal of the UP Provincial Congress Committee to send you to the Central Assembly. A few hours later your telegram regarding your decision to refuse the offer came. I cannot understand why they should have put up your name without ascertaining your wishes. I have got the proposals from the UP Congress Committee in which your name is placed first from the seven cities. The date for nominations is very near and I had therefore to wire today to Pantji to select another in your place and send the proposal to me. They have not even obtained the pledges from the candidates whose proposals have been sent to me.

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I read in the Press that you were down with influenza. I hope you have got over it by this time.

I am enclosing herewith a manifesto drawn up by Jawaharlal and corrected by Bapu. This is intended for the Central Assembly elections. As we are not likely to meet early, a copy of this manifesto has been sent to Maulana also for approval. If you have to suggest anything please write to me immediately as the matter is to be treated as urgent.

What has Sucheta¹ [Kripalani] done about her new appointment? When is she going to take charge and where would you go after her going to Wardha for that purpose?

I am going to Bombay for a week on the 25th for some business and will return here on the 1st. Bapu is going to stay here during my absence. After my return he will decide about his programme for Bengal.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

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TELEGRAM

Poona
17 October 1945

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
Nainital

KRIPALANI DECLINES TO STAND. SELECT ANOTHER FROM SEVEN CITIES
AND WIRE.

VALLABHBHAI

126

Lucknow
17 October 1945

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I am in receipt of your telegram. You should have received my reply sent this morning. I am rather perplexed. I was credibly informed that Kripalaniji was prepared to shoulder the

¹ Wife of Acharya Kripalani; lecturer, Banaras Hindu University, 1931-39; member, CA, 1946; member, CWC, 1950-52; Lok Sabha, 1952-62; Chief Minister, UP, October 1963 to March 1967

responsibility. The proposal was made in writing by some of our common friends who were believed to be in close touch with him. The question was in fact directly put by me to some of them and they assured me that they had put up his name after consulting him. I did not personally sound him as I thought that it would not be quite in the fitness of things to do so till we had your approval. Sometimes such inquiry is a little embarrassing and even irritating. We ourselves readily welcomed the suggestion, and the minds of some of us had in fact been running in the same direction even independently. Kripalaniji would have been an immense source of strength to the party in the Assembly. One holding the prominent position he does in public life would have raised the general standard and stamina of the Congress Party in the Central Legislature. However, as he is not willing we have to find a suitable substitute. I do not know if it has appeared in the papers on that side, but it is a fact that steps were taken after we had decided to send up his name by friends closely associated with him to have the initials of his name which were wrongly entered in the electoral register amended and the necessary corrections have been made. It appears that all these measures had been taken without any reference to him in the hope that he would not decline the offer when made. This hope however has not matured. I cannot send you fresh proposals forthwith. I am calling an emergency meeting of the Provincial Election Board on the 20th as I have already informed you, and hope to be able to wire the final selections some time on the 20th. Only I am afraid the proposals may leak out prematurely in consequence of such telegraphic communication. We had not formally consulted even other nominees. As indicated above, we thought it would not be quite appropriate to do so before you had placed your seal of approval on them. I am now trying to get in touch with others also and before we send you any final list we will now take care to ascertain the wishes of the persons whom we recommend. This instance will serve as a lesson and we will be more careful hereafter.

I annex my tour programme for the next fortnight. Letters and telegrams bearing my name will, I expect, reach me wherever I happen to be.

Trust this finds you well.

Yours sincerely,
G. B. Pant

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Poona
18 October 1945

My dear Pantji,

As desired by you in your letter, I authorise you to publish the names of the candidates submitted by you for the Central Assembly except that of Mr. Kripalani who has declined to accept the offer. I do not know why he was not consulted before his name was proposed.

Mr. Padampat Singhanian¹ writes to me today that in the province of UP there being no reservation for representation of commerce and industry they have to look to the Congress for such representation, and he wants me to look into the matter and advise the provincial parliamentary board to provide at least one representative of commerce and industry in these elections for the Central Assembly. I have written to him that his letter is too late and that the names proposed by the UPPCC have already been sanctioned, and that there is no time left for making any changes at this late stage.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
Nainital

Poona
22 October 1945

Dear Friend,

Your recommendations of:

- | Name | Constituency |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Shri Balkishan Sharma | from Seven Cities |
| 2. Shri Kishenchandra Sharma | from Meerut Division |
| 3. Krishna Dutt Paliwal | from Agra Division |
| 4. Shri Damodar Swarup Seth | from Rohilkhand & Kumaon Division |

¹ Industrialist of Kanpur, MLA, 1937-38; member, CA, 1949-52

5. Pandit Govind Malaviya from Allahabad & Jhansi Division
6. Babu Sri Prakasa from Benares & Gorakhpur Division
7. Shri Mohanlal Saxena from Lucknow Division
8. Sardar Jogendra Singh from Fyzabad Division

as Congress candidates for the Central Assembly elections have been approved and you may inform the candidates accordingly. We hope the Congress will come out victorious with a thumping majority in all these constituencies.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Secretary
UP Prov. Congress Committee
Lucknow

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Poona
23 October 1945

My dear Pantji,

I have received your letter of the 17th instant.

The Board met on the 21st and 22nd and disposed of selections of 43 constituencies of different provinces. The report about it has appeared in the Press already. Except for the Punjab and Bengal we have practically finished the whole of India. From Bengal I have not yet got any information, but as Maulana [Azad] is there he will be able to deal with it. As far as the Punjab is concerned the president of the Punjab Provincial Committee is coming here today and we shall dispose of it tomorrow.

I am going to Bombay tomorrow afternoon for a week and will return here on or about the 1st.

I published the nominations of your province because people were pestering me with all sorts of recommendations and proposals. It was necessary to stop all that. From Benares Sri Prakasa wired to me recommending the inclusion of Ram Ratan Gupta¹. Mr. Padampat Singhania wrote to me for providing one seat for commerce and industry.

I am surprised about Kripalani's attitude in this matter. I do not understand him. How can a common friend give his proposal in writing if he had not got some inkling about it?

¹ Industrialist of Kanpur, close associate of R. A. Kidwai; Mayor of Kanpur; was twice member of Central Legislature

I have been sending all the proposals from our committee to him for opinion, but his replies are very queer.

He seems to be dissatisfied and sends remarks which suggest that his opinion is unnecessary.

What is going to happen about the Muslim seats of the Central Assembly in your province? Is there going to be no Congress candidate? Are there any independent Muslims contesting the League candidates? Please give me a full picture of the situation in this connection.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
Jaunpur

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TELEGRAM

Calcutta
23 October 1945

Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

YOUR TELEGRAM TWENTY-FIRST. BENGAL ELECTION BOARD PROPOSE ARUNCHANDRA ONLY CANDIDATE FOR SURMA VALLEY CONSTITUENCY. WIRE DECISION.

PRAFULLA GHOSH, SECRETARY, BENGAL BOARD

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Poona
23 October 1945

My dear Prafulla Babu,

Thanks for your telegram this morning about the Bengal recommendation for the Surma Valley constituency. I have wired in reply as under:

ARUNCHANDRA'S SELECTION SURMA VALLEY CONSTITUENCY APPROVED.

I have received a telegram from the BPCC secretary, Sjt. Kalipada Mukherji, that the Bengal proposals for the Central Assembly candidates will not be submitted before the 29th. The

nomination date is 3 November. The date fixed for the selection of candidates is very late and leaves very little margin. Of course, you and Maulana being there, I have nothing much to see in these proposals. Maulana would be able to give his final approval, but as soon as the proposals are ready they should be communicated to me for our office here.

I have no idea as to the position of the Congress in this matter. There are, I believe, six non-Mohammedan seats. Sarat Babu is going to contest one. Who are the other five likely to be selected? Would it be possible to include one Christian or Harijan? Informally, have you thought of any names? What about the Muslim seats? How many Muslim seats have you got? I think about 8 or 9. How many Congress candidates are to be set up for these seats and what is your estimate about the chances of success? Are there any independent Muslims contesting any of these seats? Please send me all the information as soon as possible.

I am going to Bombay tomorrow for a week and if you write anything during this interval, do so by air mail at my Bombay address.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. P.C. Ghosh
Calcutta

132

Bombay
26 October 1945

My dear Prafulla Babu,

I have received your letter of the 23rd instant. You say in your letter that the Bengal Election Board was formed on the 19th. But the chairman is at Kurseong and out of the three members, including the chairman, Mahamadi Ashrafuddin, is in jail, and therefore you are the sole member in charge of the elections in Bengal. It is not a very satisfactory arrangement. Independently you will be able to do nothing without obtaining the consent of the chairman who is not there.

The Central Assembly nominations are to be given on the 3rd and yet no proposals can be formulated till the 2nd when you expect Sarat Babu to return. Surely this would create great

difficulties in our work. What is the Hindu Mahasabha going to do? How many seats are they going to contest? Who are the probable candidates to be selected on the Congress ticket? Please give me some rough idea of these things.

What is going to happen about the provincial elections? Will the responsibility of selections and running the elections devolve on the small committee of these three persons? Or will you form another board? I hope that all efforts will be made to present a united front in these elections against all opposition to the Congress, either from the Hindu Mahasabha or the Muslim League or any other anti-Congress group. This is a question of now or never. Bengal has suffered tremendously in the past five years and it is for us to make or mar the future of Bengal. The Congress must present a united front and sink all its personal differences. There should be no desire on the part of anybody to take advantage of the present situation and work on party lines or to work for strengthening one's party organisation.

I had a letter from Maulana Sahib today in which he says that so far as Bengal is concerned the expenses required will be raised by Bengal largely but some help will be required from the Centre also. Please discuss this question in all its aspects very carefully with Maulana Sahib as well as with your own reliable friends and let me have some rough idea as to the amount which will be required and what part of it will be raised in the province and what will be required by way of help from the Centre. I wish to ascertain my own responsibility so that I may be able to arrange in time to meet all our requirements. I am sending this letter by air mail and expect you also to reply by air mail. I am leaving Bombay for Poona on 1 November.

Hoping you are doing well,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh
Calcutta

PS.

I hear that Sarat Babu is coming here on the 5th for a day.

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TELEGRAM

Calcutta
10 November 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

ARRIVED HERE YESTERDAY. MAULANA LEFT FOR BINDHAGHAL SEVENTH. YOUR LETTER AND DETAILS OF OUR CONVERSATION REGARDING CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD MEETING AND SIKH QUESTION BEING SENT HIM TODAY BY SPECIAL MESSENGER.

SARATBOSE

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Poona
11 November 1945

My dear Sarat,

Thanks for your telegram.

I was very sorry to hear that you missed the train by ten minutes. It must have put you to a lot of inconvenience.

I am thankful to you for sending a special messenger to Maulana as the letter and the instructions I have given for him were urgent.

The scrutiny is over and the election campaign must have commenced in full swing. Please keep me informed of the nature and strength of opposition in all the constituencies, both Muslim and non-Muslim.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose
1 Woodburn Park
Calcutta

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TELEGRAM

Kurseong
12 November 1945

Sardar Patel
Poona

MAULVI WALIUR RAHMAN CANDIDATE PRESIDENCY-CUM-BURDWAN AND MAULVI MOHIUDDIN KHAN CANDIDATE RAJSHAHI DIVISION MOHAMEDAN CONSTITUENCIES CENTRAL ASSEMBLY INFORMED ME AND PRESIDENT BPCG ON TENTH THAT THEY WOULD STAND ON CONGRESS TICKET AND NO OTHER TICKET. PLEASE APPROVE AND MAKE NECESSARY ANNOUNCEMENT.

SARATBOSE

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TELEGRAM

Poona
13 November 1945

President
Bengal Provincial Congress Committee
Calcutta

ACCORDING SARATBOSE'S TELEGRAM MAULVI WALIUR RAHMAN'S CANDIDATURE PRESIDENCY-CUM-BURDWAN DIVISION AND MAULVI MOHIUDDIN'S CANDIDATURE RAJSHAHI DIVISION MOHAMEDAN CONSTITUENCIES CENTRAL ASSEMBLY APPROVED. PLEASE INFORM CANDIDATES CONCERNED.

VALLABHBHAI

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TELEGRAM

Calcutta
15 November 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

YOUR TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT BPCC. I AS SECRETARY ELECTION BOARD WAS NOT INFORMED ANYTHING ABOUT CONGRESS CANDIDATURE OF WALIUR RAHMAN AND MOHIUDDIN KHAN BY SARATBABU.
PRAFULLA GHOSH

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TELEGRAM

Calcutta
24 November 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

REQUEST YOU ADDRESS NUMBER OF ELECTION MEETINGS CALCUTTA SUBURBS CONSTITUENCY WHERE SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE CONTESTING CONGRESS NOMINEE NAGENDRANATH MUKHOPADHYAY. POLLING ON ELEVENTH DECEMBER. WIRE YOUR CONSENT GIVING ARRIVAL DATE FOR WORKING COMMITTEE.

KIRON SHANKAR ROY¹

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TELEGRAM

Bombay
25 November 1945

Kiron Shankar Roy
Congress
Calcutta

YOUR WIRE. HEALTH DELICATE. REGRET CAN'T FIX PROGRAMME BEFORE REACHING CALCUTTA.

VALLABHBHAI

¹ Leader of Congress party in Bengal Legislative Assembly

Dear Sardarji,

Sjt. Kiron Shankar Roy has telegraphed to you requesting you to address a number of meetings in the Calcutta suburban constituency (Central Legislative Assembly election) where Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee is contesting Sj. Nagendranath Mukhopadhyay, the Congress nominee. The contest in this constituency will be fought on the ideological plane but personal equation may creep in. Although Sj. Nagendranath Mukhopadhyay, B.L., is a veteran Congressman who non-co-operated in 1921 and never resumed practice, having been incarcerated several times, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee in communal-ridden Bengal where the Congress Nationalist Party did a good deal of mischief will try, to mislead the electors whose number is limited and confined to the upper class Hindus. The constituency comprises the urban areas of three districts, viz. Hooghly, Howrah and 24 Parganas but the Congress organisation in the latter district being not very strong, the electors there will understand the Congress view re: self-determination and Pakistan if it comes from you and I am sure if you address a number of meetings victory of the Congress candidate will be assured.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Atulya Ghosh
Officer-in-Charge
Congress Election Office

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

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29 November 1945

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter asking me to address a number of meetings in the Calcutta suburban constituency for the Central Assembly election. Sjt. Kiron Shankar Roy had sent me a telegram for the same purpose but my health is very delicate and I am going out for the first time after a long time. Whether my health will bear the strain of this journey and the normal work of the two committees for which I am coming to Calcutta is a question. I do not think I will be able to address any meetings nor do I think that Dr. B. C. Roy will allow me to undertake any such programme. However, you can see me when I am there.

Yours sincerely,
• Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Atulya Ghosh
Calcutta

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TELEGRAM

29 November 1945

Sarat Bose
Calcutta

YOUR WIRE. WILL AGREE IF HEALTH PERMITS AFTER ARRIVAL.

VALLABHBHAI

143

Raipur
31 October 1945

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I am sure we shall be able to give you a strong and united team from our province. Till the elections are over nobody now is in a position to dictate to us anything and we are not at the mercy of any group. The province as a whole stands by us and

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we shall be able to give a good account of ourselves. For the Central Assembly all our three nominees have been returned unopposed. In the landholders' constituency Mr. Ganpat Rao Dani has also been returned unopposed as you know already. . . .

I am surprised that of all persons my son Bhagwati should have written a long letter of bitter complaint to Babu against Seth Shivdas Daga. I shall be obliged if you kindly send me a copy of that letter. Bhagwati is a sentimental boy and I feel he has played into the hands of interested persons. . . .

Seth Govind Das¹ seems to be drifting away from his moorings; but I hope he will soon discover his mistake and realise that it will not pay him to work in the manner he has started. We are not obstructing him in any way nor do we propose to create any trouble which will again give a bad name to our province. It was surprising that Seth Govind Das's son applied to you directly for a ticket for the Central Assembly ignoring UPCC. I am not sure whether it was done without the knowledge of Seth Govind Das. His withdrawal subsequently has closed the episode. It is a pointer for the future and we shall have to act cautiously. . . .

With best wishes,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
R. S. Shukla

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Poona
7 November 1945

My dear Ravishankar,

I have your two letters of 31 October which reached me only yesterday. I have destroyed your son's long letter as I thought it was not worth preserving. It was a long tirade against Mr. Shivdas Daga containing charges of black-marketing and other misdeeds. It was alleged in this letter that his release was arranged through his man who paid money for the war fund. I do not think this is a matter worth worrying about.

Mr. [H. V.] Kamath² met me in Bombay at my place. He is anxious to know what he should do in your province. If you want

¹ Oldest living parliamentarian in India; became MLA in 1923; AICC member since 1920; prolific Hindi writer

² Joined ICS in London 1929; resigned 1938 to join freedom movement; later joined Forward Bloc; member, Central Assembly, 1940; elected to Lok Sabha on PSP ticket in 1955 and 1962; member, Administrative Reforms Commission

him he is willing to go to the Provincial Assembly. If you do not want him there he would rather not go. I think he had some talk about it with your colleague, Mr. Mehta. I should like to know your opinion in this matter as also Mr. Asaf Ali's.

I congratulate you for the unopposed return of all the three candidates from your province for the Central Assembly. It is the best record so far and I hope the same will be the result in the provincial elections also. I also hope that you will be able to secure some Muslim seats against the League in the Provincial Assembly.

I have already guessed about the attitude of Seth Govind Das. His son's proposal for nomination gave me a clue.

I am here till the 19th and then we go to Bombay. As your Central Assembly elections are over, if you can come here, preferably both of you, it would be good. I want to discuss certain important matter in connection with the three provinces grouped in your governmental province. It is difficult to discuss all matters by correspondence. Please inform me by wire. Your letter reached me six days after.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Ravishankar Shukla
Raipur

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44 King's Way
Nagpur
6 November 1945

My dear Chief,

In continuation of my letter to you from Bombay I have to state that I am now in a position to report about the position of the two labour seats in this province (C.P. & Berar).

The seat at Nagpur is from the Trade Union constituency. Only two trade unions in this constituency have been certified by the Governor. Of these two trade unions the Nagpur Textile Labour Union is entitled to vote for nearly 6,000 members. Mr. R. S. Ruiker¹ is the president of this union. The other trade union, known as the Press Employees Association, has about 250 members on the electoral rolls. Of the 6,000 members belonging

¹ Leading labour leader of Bombay

to the Textile Labour Union over 2,000 represent the Mahar community, while 600 represent the Mussalman community. The rest are caste Hindus. I understand that the Depressed Class Federation are thinking of setting up a candidate who is entitled to vote in the Trade Union constituency. But they have not so far been able to find a suitable candidate who can defeat Mr. Ruiker.

The other Labour seat is from Jubbulpore representing the unorganised factory labour within the municipal limits of Jubbulpore, Katni and Kymore. I am the sitting member of this constituency. The Communists wanted to set up candidates both in Trade Union constituency of Nagpur and the factory labour Constituency of Jubbulpore. But I am afraid that they cannot set up any non-worker member of the Communist Party. Should they set up a worker, he will have very little support and he is sure to be defeated. Except for purposes of nuisance value, the Communists cannot have any advantage in setting up a worker either at Nagpur or at Jubbulpore.

The labour seat of the Jubbulpore Unorganised Labour constituency can, therefore, be successfully contested by a Congress candidate.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
V. R. Kalappa¹

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

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Poona
9 November 1945

Dear Mr. Kalappa,

I have received your letter of the 6th instant.

I have not written to you anything about Mr. Salve's selection for the Central Assembly. You know that he is the only Christian candidate selected from all over India and our great national organisation cannot afford to neglect the claims of important minorities. Your claim therefore had to be overlooked, but that need not disappoint you. After all, in whatever place you are, you will be able to serve the cause which is dear to your heart.

¹ Andhra leader elected to Constituent Assembly from CP

Even if Mr. Salve had not been selected, Punamchandji's claim would have come in the way of your selection, because the Nagpur committee gave him priority over all.

Yet we had to pass over all in consideration of the minority's claim.

You have not written to me anything about the state of things in Nagpur. How is Salve's election [campaign] going on? I trust there will be no difficulty.

I have noted the information that you have supplied regarding the labour constituency, for which I thank you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri V. R. Kalappa
Nagpur

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4 Kondi Chetty Street
George Town
Madras
8 November 1945

Dear Sardarji,

I am in receipt of your letter dated the 26th ultimo with enclosures. I am sorry I have not been able to acknowledge the same till now since I had been touring in the mofussil. I have recently visited the Tanjore constituency. Our candidate, Shri T. V. Satagopachari, will surely have a walk-over. I have no doubt that we shall have a cent per cent victory in the present elections.

I have already written to you about Sri Masilamani Pillai's matter.

Yours sincerely,
K. Kamaraj¹

¹Joined freedom struggle at a young age; President of Tamilnad PCC, 1940-1954; member, CA; Chief Minister of Madras, 1954-63; Congress President, 1964-67; member, Lok Sabha, since 1969

Madras
21 November 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of the 18th from Poona arrived duly as also one from Bapu. I see that Dr. [P] Subbarayan¹ who was there for cricket had worried you a lot over his and my grievances and on top of it my letter reached you. I see you are thoroughly upset.

I know the difficulties you point out. I thought it best to let you know what I am feeling in reply to your letter of the 6th and let it remain in your mind so that you may see from time to time what could possibly be done.

I wish to explain to you one thing. There was no offer to me to accept a place in the Central Legislature. You never wrote or wired to me. I should have thought several times before rejecting a definite proposal or desire on your part. I was not enthusiastic enough to seize [?] a casual mention of it by others. In fact it was only when I asked Kamaraj Nadar generally what happened when he met you and whether you advised him to do anything, he laughed and said in a most casual way that you suggested I might stand for the Madras seat of the Central Legislature. In the meantime other names were being canvassed. I had no notion that any serious thought was entertained about my accepting it. I write all this because Dr. Subbarayan told me that you had thought this was a way out. Otherwise it is irrelevant. If Kamaraj told or wired to you that I refused to accept a definite proposal he was wrong.

I hope your health is better as a net result of your long stay in Poona. I am in the same unsatisfactory condition yet.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

¹ Landlord of Kumaramangalam: MLA (Madras) for several years from 1920; member, AICC, 1937-49; Law Minister (Madras), 1937-39 and 1947-48; member, CA; Chief Minister of Madras; Indian Ambassador to Indonesia, 1949-51; MP (Rajya Sabha); Union Minister 1954-57; Governor of Bombay

23 November 1945

My dear Rajaji,

I have received your letter of the 21st inst. Dr. Subbarayan met me at Poona twice and I have explained to him about my suggestion for your going to the Central Assembly. Sjt. Kamaraj Nadar told me that he had already made such a proposal to you through Sjt Gopala Reddy¹ of Andhra but you declined to accept it. As I found that both the Andhra and Tamil leaders were willing to send you to the Centre, I handed over the Madras city proposal and sent Sjt. Kamaraj back to Madras with instructions that he should first see you and make you this offer. In case you accepted this proposal, he was instructed to communicate your acceptance to me by wire. In the event of your refusal, he was to find out a Christian candidate, if possible. The third alternative was of Mrs. Swaminathan. I am enclosing herewith a copy of the letter received by me from Sjt. Kamaraj on 26 Oct. I do not know why you declined to accept that offer. If I thought that your way in the province was easy, I would not have suggested that you should go to the Centre. As I sensed many difficulties in your way for the provincial leadership, I made this suggestion, which could have cleared your way for the future, but I thought that perhaps you did not agree with my reading of the situation and you may be able to smoothen the affairs of the province and so you rejected this offer.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

¹ Member, Andhra Pradesh Parliamentary Board; Minister in Rajaji Cabinet in Madras, 1937-39; later Union Minister; presently Governor of Uttar Pradesh

Madras
27 November 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have your kind letter of the 23rd. I am surprised to read the last paragraph of Sri Kamaraj's letter to you dated 26 October. Kamaraj did not convey to me any serious proposal that I should stand for the Central Assembly. The suggestion was never lifted above the level of casual and indirect reference. It is a tragedy. I wish you had written or wired to me direct. If you had done so, the position would have been wholly different.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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TELEGRAM

Madras
22 November 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

JUST SEEN YOUR LETTER. MYSELF WILL RUN UP SOON AND REMOVE DOUBTS AND TROUBLES AS ADVISED. REST ASSURED THAT WE COME OUT SUCCESSFULLY WITH THUMPING MAJORITY. SEE LETTER.

¹ Congress leader known as Lion of Andhra; member, CA; Premier of Madras after elections in 1946; first Chief Minister of Andhra State

Warris Road
Lahore
1 November 1945

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I returned from Calcutta yesterday. There I had a talk with Maulana Sahib on the same lines as with you; but as decisions had been taken with regard to the Centre, the only possibility—if there was only hope still—related to provincial seats. In this regard, on my return here, I find matter further deteriorated; except that Master Tara Singh seems to have at last made up his mind to send a representative to you which is a ray of hope. This individual should reach there soon after this letter. While you can depend on my doing my best, I still think that the chances of the success of our candidates without a settlement with the Sikhs are meagre. Moreover, any fight in elections will result in giving advantage to the Communists in more seats than half a dozen and this will be most unfortunate. But if this were all, perhaps we would not worry. As it happens, the present position as between ourselves and the Sikhs is having its repercussion on wider fields. This rift has emboldened the Pakistanists and pro-Leaguers even in friendly quarters among Muslims—as you might have noticed in the recent Press statements in the Punjab. All this happened while I have been away; and naturally one feels lost for the moment. I cannot say more. Nor can I open my mind to anyone except you. I still wish to cling to my belief that the little work done here to ensure the defeat of Pakistanist groups will prove true. I assure you we shall throw our whole energy to do your bidding. But our own organisation is weak here and for that simple reason, it seems in my humble judgment necessary—perhaps imperative—that friendly alliances with the Sikhs and others should be made possible.

I hope it will be possible for you to come here. That will of course make all the difference.

Yours sincerely,
B. S. Gilani

Poona
9 November 1945

My dear Gilani,

I received your letter of 1 November on the 7th. In the evening I got a phone from Sardar Basant Singhji from Bombay. He was laid up with fever and therefore he came here yesterday with Master Tara Singh's letter. I have explained to him the whole situation. At this late stage it is impossible to disturb or cancel the arrangement made by the Election Board for the Central Assembly elections. We cannot withdraw from the contest in either constituency at this stage. It is not open to me to do so as the selections have been made by the Board and nominations filed and even the scrutiny is over.

Regarding the provincial elections, of course, if there is goodwill on both sides a settlement can still be reached. The difficulty was created by the resolution [passed] by the Siromani Akali Dal Conference. Otherwise, I was all along for a settlement between the Sikhs and the Congress. The first attack came from the Akalis.

I have never concealed from you my apprehension about the Unionist Party's attitude. Their leader has at last come out with a statement which has not surprised me. It is sad that such a statement should have been made at this stage. What trust can be placed if the best amongst them can't stand on their own ground?

At this stage nothing can be done without reference to Maulana and if reasonable proposals for a settlement for the provincial elections can come from there I would try my best to persuade him to come to an understanding, but I have received no encouragement from the Sikhs, and therefore I am sorry to say that I am helpless in the matter till they change their attitude.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

B. S. Gilani
Lahore

Lajpatrai Bhawan
Lahore
2 November 1945

Dear Sardar,

I reached back on the 30th morning. It was the day of scrutiny. Dr. [Gokul Chand] Narang¹ met me there and said that he might give up the contest, provided the position regarding parity and Pakistan was cleared up. Pandit Nanakchand,² Bar-at-law, helped us a great deal in persuading Dr. Narang to withdraw. It was 5 minutes to three on the 31st that Dr. [Narang] withdrew his candidature. Pandit Nanakchand wrote a letter to me and I sent a letter in reply to Dr. Narang as well as to Pandit Nanakchand. Copies of both the letters are enclosed herewith. The letter is only a declaration and not an undertaking. We have nowhere asked him to withdraw. He withdrew after consultation with his friends. We declared nothing more than what has been decided by the WC or the AICC.

Lala Shamlal,³ Kidar Nath⁴ and Shauno Devi⁵ went to Calcutta about brother's seat. You perhaps wrote to Maulana that Mr. Asaf Ali supported his candidature. Deshbandhuji⁶ [Gupta] informs that Maulana has written to Mr. Asaf Ali that he should not have supported him. There is one Manoharlal Gupta who has not withdrawn his application. He is Lala Shamlal's and Lala Dunichand Ambalvi's man. Lala Dunichand⁷ has now adopted

¹ Leading barrister of Lahore; Minister, Local Self-Government (Punjab); relinquished knighthood in 1945 in protest against Government's attitude to legitimate rights of Hindus; later President, Hindu Mahasabha; pioneered industrial development in Punjab

² Leading member of Punjab Council under Montford Reforms

³ Leading advocate of Hissar

⁴ Revolutionary of Punjab, popularly known as Siyahposh Jernail, meaning general in black robes; took vow not to give up this dress until freedom was won

⁵ Educationist who joined Congress party and was elected to Punjab Legislative Assembly and rose to be its Speaker.

⁶ Disciple of Swami Shraddhanand; Director of Urdu daily Tej; leading Congressman of Delhi; member of AICC and Lok Sabha

⁷ Leading Congressman of Ambala; MLA (Punjab)

an attitude which is favourable to Bhai Parmanand¹ and the Hindu Sabha. Though both the general seats are being contested, yet our success is sure.

As for the Sikh seats, the contest is very keen. Sardar Partap Singh [Kairon]² is of the opinion that as we have not been able to begin work in East Punjab (S. Kapur Singh's constituency) our position is weak. In S. Sant Singh's³ constituency it is reported that our position is strong. We begin work in right earnest in a day or two. Our Congress sympathisers, barring some Congressmen, are of the opinion that we should settle with the Akalis. Congress Sikh friends met yesterday at Amritsar and discussed matters with pro-Congress Akalis. Sardar Partap Singh was there. He is of the opinion, and others agree with him, that it is not possible for us to settle about the Centre now. We do not want to sacrifice S. Kapur Singh and now we cannot even sacrifice S. Sant Singh. Sardar Kapur Singh comes here tomorrow or the day after. I will wire you his position. The Sikh friends who met at Amritsar agree with each other that adjustments can be made about provincial seats. Communists we have to oppose at any cost. Two of the Congress Sikhs and two Akalis will discuss the chances of respective candidates with me and Maulana Daud. We will try to agree and adjust almost all seats. If there are any left on which we cannot agree we will fight but that contest will be a friendly contest. Bitterness will disappear. But we shall settle positively about seats which are being contested by the Communists. The weaker will give up and allow the stronger to fight the Communists.

Sardar Basant Singh, who is a representative of Akalis, is meeting you. He will discuss with you about the Centre. I have described above that opinions and advice differ about settlement at the Centre. Please decide as you think best. Chances I will wire in a day or two and you will probably get the telegram before the letter reaches you. There is another suggestion also, that both our and their all four candidates give their letters of

¹ Publicist and professor; sentenced to transportation for life to Andamans for nationalist activities; broke with Congress and became permanent President of Hindu Mahasabha

² Educated in US where he joined Ghaddar party, which was working for India's liberation; joined Congress in 1930; MLA (Punjab), 1936; re-elected in 1946; member, C.A. 1946; General Secretary, PCC, 1939-46; President, 1950-52; member, CWC, 1946-53; Minister, 1947-49; 1952-56; Chief Minister of Punjab, 1956-61; assassinated in February 1965

³ Lawyer from Lyallpur in Punjab; member, Central Assembly with pro-Congress leanings; ended career as Ambassador to Ethiopia

resignation and after the result has been declared the resignation of successful candidates be tendered if it is thought desirable that any one or both of the successful candidates are to be withdrawn in case the Akalis and the Congress come to an agreement. Suppose it is agreed that one seat ought to go to Akalis and one to the Congress, and suppose both Congressmen succeed, we will ask one of our nominees to resign. The Akalis will then nominate a person who is a desirable one. If we get one, then no resignations are to be filed. If both Akalis succeed, one will resign and vacate the seat for the Congress. I do not know how it will be liked by you, Congressmen and Akalis.

Please discuss with him about provincial seats even if there is no settlement about Central seats. The agreement which I have described above may be accepted if you approve of it. Master Tara Singh, who did not listen to any talk of compromise, is ready for agreement now. There will be no harm if such a settlement about provincial seats is arrived at.

I could not discuss it with Maulana Daud owing to pressure of time. I will discuss tomorrow and wire if he agrees with me. Please discuss matters with him and settle them as well. Please send your instructions with S. Basant Singhji. I am sending this letter with him under a sealed cover.

We shall be able to prepare the budget in a few days and submit it. The meeting of our WC is being called for the 7th to decide about the Parliamentary Board. The other group is bent upon creating mischief. The Muslim workers of their group met yesterday and adopted an insulting attitude towards Maulana Daud.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

Poona
8 November 1945

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

I have received your letter of 2 November just now through Sardar Basant Singhji. I shall confine myself to the Sikh question

only in this letter as he is in a hurry to return back by the next available train. Regarding other matters referred to in your letter I will write to you later.

So far as the Central Assembly seats are concerned it is impossible for us now to reconsider the situation. We must fight out the elections in both these constituencies as the decision has been taken by the Board, publicly announced and nominations filed and scrutinised also. Of course we should fight out the elections with due restraint and perfect dignity. There should be no bitterness as both the organisations stand for the independence of India and there is much common ground between them.

As for the provincial elections, the question is worth considering if there is willingness on both sides. But I cannot do anything without reference to Maulana [Azad] Sahib and my Board at this stage. If you and Maulana Daud Ghaznavi along with the Congress Sikhs are of one mind, you may write to me and I will get in touch with Maulana Sahib at Calcutta. There is plenty of time for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Lahore

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TELEGRAM

Lahore
3 November 1945

Sardar Patel
Poona

PLEASE ASK SARDAR JOGINDERSINGH¹ [of] UP TOUR PUNJAB HELP ELECTION.

DAUD GHIAZNAVI, GOPICHAND

¹ Member, Central Legislature for over 20 years; presently Governor of Orissa

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TELEGRAM

Poona
4 November 1945

Sardar Joginder Singh
Care Congress
Lucknow

PUNJAB CONGRESS WANTS YOU TOUR THERE HELP ELECTION CAM-
PAIGN. ADVISE PROCEED IMMEDIATELY.

VALLABHBHAI

158

Poona
5 November 1945

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

I have read in the Press a statement issued by Sir Gokalchand Narang about his withdrawal from the contest on account of a settlement between you and him. I have also seen the resolution condemning your action in this behalf by the Nationalist Muslim workers' conference. You have not written to me anything about this. Please let me know exactly what has happened.

I had received your telegram about Sardar Joginder Singh and I have wired to him to proceed at once to Lahore. He is not a speaker and I do not think his presence would be of much help to you even if he comes there.

Please write to me about the prospects of the Central Assembly elections in the remaining four constituencies and also about the Muslim constituencies.

I hope the agitation about selections has subsided and things have settled down so that the election campaign may proceed smoothly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Lahore

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TELEGRAM

Lahore
5 November 1945

Sardar Patel
Poona

KAPURSINGH [chances] FIFTY FIFTY. MAULANA EXPRESSES NO
OPINION.

GOPICHAND

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TELEGRAM

Poona
7 November 1945

Maulana Daud Ghaznavi
Care Congress
Lahore

Diwan Chamanlal
Care Congress
Lahore

Sardar Partap Singh
Care Congress
Lahore

Doctor Gopichand Bhargava
Lajpatrai Bhawan
Lahore

WIRE YOUR ESTIMATE CHANCES EACH CANDIDATE REMAINING FOUR
CONSTITUENCIES CENTRAL ASSEMBLY.

VALLABHBHAI

Poona
8 November 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I have just received your wire suggesting that I should ask Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to visit Punjab for the Central Assembly election campaign. He is in Bombay at present and I am writing him today. His programme is fixed up for Bombay till the 15th. If he can come at all he can do so after the 15th. But he will inform you direct.

Yesterday I sent you a wire inquiring about your estimate regarding the remaining four Central Assembly seats. About the two Hindu seats I have hardly any doubt about the result, but about the two Sikh seats I am anxious and I want to know the exact position. Sardar Kapur Singh is a strong candidate and Sardar Sant Singh's position was supposed to be strong. I have heard nothing from you since you left Bombay and your telegram asking for Jawaharlal makes me anxious. Please write to me in detail.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Daud Ghaznavi
President
Punjab PCC
Lahore

Poona
9 November 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I had received your wire asking me to send Pandit Nehru to Punjab. I phoned to him yesterday at Bombay and he has agreed to come there after his Bombay programme is over, i.e. after the 15th. He is meeting me here on the 12th and I will wire to you about his visit to the Punjab.

Your joint telegram about the prospects of the Sikh seats has been received this morning. We must marshal our forces

and carry on a vigorous campaign to win these two seats. No effort should be spared and with that hope I have been able to persuade Pandit Nehru to come there again. I trust his visit will put the final seal to all doubts about our success there.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Daud Ghazanvi
Lahore

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TELEGRAM

Poona
9 November 1945

Maulana Daud Ghaznavi
Care Congress
Lahore

HAVE PERSUADED JAWAHARLAL VISIT PUNJAB AFTER FIFTEENTH.
HE WILL WIRE DIRECT.

VALLABHBHAI

164

Poona
9 November 1945

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

I have sent you a short letter with Sardar Basant Singhji. This morning I have received your and Maulana Ghaznavi's wire in reply to mine. It is not possible now to withdraw from the contest in any of the two constituencies. We must fight it out and we must also win. You must marshal all your forces and see that we don't lose.

Yesterday I had received a telegram from Maulana Ghaznavi asking me to send Pandit Nehru for a tour in the Punjab for the election campaign. I spoke to Jawaharlal on the phone at Bombay and he has been good enough to agree. He will come after his Bombay programme is over, that is after the 15th. He will inform Maulana Ghaznavi directly. I trust that this will be of great help to you.



IN SIMPLE VILLAGE DRESS WHEN HE LED THE BARDOLI SATYAGRAHA



PARTY LEADERS, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA, MANIBEN, SARDAR PATEL,
PURUSHOTTAMDAS TANDON AND G. RAJAGOPALACHARI

I did not know that the three friends from the Punjab had gone to Calcutta about your brother's seat. Maulana wired to me even after you left Bombay and I had to explain to him that several members, including Mr. Asaf Ali, had supported his candidature. Of course he did not like it and wrote a letter to Asaf Ali, from whom I learned about it.

I have read the copies of the correspondence you had sent to me. About parity you have quoted correctly from the Working Committee's instructions. But about the other matter, you should also have quoted the Working Committee's resolution passed at Poona instead of putting any interpretation on it or saying anything about it. Your doing so has given the excuse for your opponents in the Congress to condemn your action. However, that is past and it is over.

I am going to Bombay on the 19th and after the Central Assembly election campaign is over you can come and meet me in Bombay by appointment for the provincial election affairs. I should like to know when the provincial elections take place in the Punjab.

What is the position of the Unionist Party now? Is it in any way affected? Why has Khizr [Hayat Khan] come out with that statement? What does that statement mean?

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Lahore

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Poona
9 November 1945

My dear Chamanlal,

Thanks for your telegram. We must not lose either of the two Sikh seats. You must combine all your forces and marshal all your strength together to succeed in this campaign. I have persuaded Jawaharlal to come there for a few days. He will come there after the 15th which will be the real time for a vigorous campaign. I trust no effort will be spared to secure victory in these two important constituencies.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Diwan Chamanlal
C/o Punjab PCC
Lahore

TELEGRAM

Bindhachal

14 November 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Poona

IF AKALIS APPROACH YOU PLEASE REFER THEM TO ME. PUNJAB SITUATION MUCH COMPLICATED. WE SHOULD FORM OPINION VERY CAREFULLY.

ABULKALAMAZAD

Poona

14 November 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I have just received your telegram of today reading:

IF AKALIS APPROACH YOU PLEASE REFER THEM TO ME. PUNJAB SITUATION MUCH COMPLICATED. WE SHOULD FORM OPINION VERY CAREFULLY.

In this connection I am sending you a copy of a letter which I received from Master Tara Singh dated 4 November through Sardar Basant Singhji who came here for that purpose. I am also enclosing herewith relevant extracts of Dr. Gopichand's letter which was brought along with Master Tara Singh's letter suggesting a compromise over the Sikh question. My reply to these approaches will be seen from the copies of my letters to Master Tara Singh and Dr. Gopichand. They are also enclosed herewith, from which you will see that I was not going to do anything without consulting you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

Lahore
15 November 1945

My dear Sardar,

I got two letters from you and one from office. As I had sent a letter through S. Basant Singhji explaining my letter to Dr. [G.C.] Narang, I did not write to you. Sardar Basant Singh left late by 2-3 days.

My friends here did not object to the Pakistan part of the letter but to the parity part. As [for] Pakistan, we had written undefined Pakistan as envisaged by its supporters, but Dr. Narang said that these words be removed to save his face. We were not prepared to mention self-determination nor he wanted it to be done. They have created trouble for Maulana Daud.

Maulana Azad wrote to Abdul Ghani that as there was very little time for nominations for the Central Assembly, their nominees could not be supported. But now for provincial elections their party shall get 50 per cent of the seats for their nominees. He has received another letter, the contents of which I will know tomorrow or the day after.

Pandit Jawaharlalji is also said to have assured them at least 50 per cent of the seats, but I doubt this statement because Panditji is not on the Board. So far Maulana Daud is not with them.

We have discussed Muslim seats. At present we can nominate five on the Congress ticket and two [of] the labour seats on the Congress ticket and seven on the Muslim Board ticket. We will need money for it; nay we need it immediately.

We will need money for the Sikh seats and for a few Hindu seats. Amongst Sikhs our important people who have been to jail will need money. So amongst Hindus. Some of the Hindu seats we expect to get unopposed provided our choice is correct.

We will require Rs. 5,50,000 as under:-

Muslims.....	2,50,000
Sikhs	1,50,000
Scheduled Caste.....	50,000
Hindus	1,00,000

This estimate is prepared in consultation with Maulana Daud. I would suggest that the money be placed in the hands of Maulana Daud. He will spend it in consultation with me. Maulana proposes to keep a few Muslim preachers for three months. Their allowance and pay shall cost us something between 20,000 and 30,000. It is worth while doing so. We will not be able to collect much because all are going to become busy in their elections.

Diwan Chamanlal has filed his [papers] for a provincial seat. I do not think he wrote to you. In the beginning he grew keen to stick to the Centre. It may be a party move now.

Sardar Basant Singh has arrived. He gave me your letter last night. Talks have begun with them. I am enclosing a draft for your perusal. It is proposed to issue this statement; with this the position of Nationalist Sikhs who are in the Akali party will become awkward and they may come over to us. Even if they do not come over, bitterness may disappear. Talks are still going on. Adjustment of seats may be done on a majority of seats. If you approve of this, ask the bearer to send a telegram saying 'approved'. If not, please wire your instructions.

Primary elections for the Scheduled Caste have begun.

Our nomination papers are to be filed on 12 December. Therefore you ought to decide about nominations at the latest before the 5th or 7th. It is proposed to send seven copies of our recommendations to you to reach you before 30 November. If you desire, one copy can be sent to each member. I will go to Bombay with those papers.

Recommendations for special constituencies will be sent on the 22nd instant. In most cases it is expected the decision will be unanimous—where we differ, Maulana Daud is expected to be with me.

Rs. 10,000 or so might have been sent to your office by Maulana Azad. When I was in Bombay I had met Mr. Motwani of Chicago Radio about supply of radio sets. He quoted Rs. 1,750 per set for us. Please instruct the office people to buy two sets out of that amount and send them per bearer. They are urgently required.

Please send some money immediately. We had about Rs. 18,000 with us. We propose to give Rs. 7,000 to a Muslim candidate for the Central Assembly who is expected to defeat a Muslim Leaguer. He has given it in writing that he will join Nationalist Muslims and not join the Muslim League if elected. His chances are favourable.

I forgot to suggest above that the charge of money be given to Maulana [Daud] and me and not to the Board, because other friends will bring pressure to misspend it and also announce that the Congress is helping the Muslims.

Pandit Nehru reaches the Punjab on the morning of the 18th and reaches Delhi on the morning of the 21st or the night of the 20th.

The chances of success are growing bright. We are trying our level best.

Rai Bahadur Mukand Lal Puri¹ (father-in-law of Shri Bhim Sen Sachar) is contesting Sir Manohar Lal², the sitting member in the University constituency. Rai Bahadur [M.L. Puri] approached us and said that he was prepared to renounce his title and apply for the Congress ticket provided we would accept him. He also says that if we do not accept him as such, he is prepared to give an undertaking that he would join us after the elections. But his past conduct shows that he is unreliable. No other candidate than Shri Bhim Sen Sachar can win this seat if the fight is triangular. The probability is that Rai Bahadur will withdraw if Sachar stands. But Sachar says that he would rather not stand at all than contest [against] his father-in-law. It is he only who can win this seat for University. If we leave the seat uncontested we will get a bad name. If we nominate any other person we lose. We can offer him two seats—one in the general constituency and one this, so that if he loses in the University, he goes to the Assembly in his general seat. If he succeeds he can resign his general seat which we will get in by-election.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

¹ Leading advocate of Lahore in undivided Punjab and member of provincial council, 1934-37; also connected with Punjab University and several educational institutions

² Prominent economist of Punjab and working trustee of the Tribune Trust; Minister of Education in Punjab under Montford Reforms

Poona
18 November 1945

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

Your letter of the 15th has just been delivered to me. I do not know how any promise of 50 per cent seats can be made to any party or group, unless there was any such understanding between the Maulana [Azad] and the parties when the settlement was brought about at the time of his last visit. I do not believe that Jawaharlal would be a party to any such understanding or assurance nor would he himself encourage such a thing.

Your budget seems to throw the whole responsibility on the Centre. It is unfair and we must be able to raise a substantial sum from the Punjab. I should think it would be easy enough to raise a good sum from Lahore itself. There are also other cities in the Punjab which can contribute for this purpose.

I am enclosing herewith a letter from Dr. Gokul Chand Narang which was received yesterday. I have not been able to give a reply, but I will do so after I reach Bombay tomorrow. I do not know why he has written this letter to me at this late stage. He has written a similar letter to Bapu also.

About the University constituency, I have written a letter to Maulana Daud Ghaznavi asking him to send his reactions to Prof. Abdul Majid Khan's application for this constituency. He has also sent me a copy of the application made to the provincial board. If it is possible to send him, it would indeed be very good, but I do not know the views of the local people.

I have received no account of money from the President, Maulana Azad. If he had sent me the money I would have written you long ago. He simply wrote to me that he has got Rs. 20,000 from the Punjab which he wanted to send me. But he has kept the amount for being used in Bengal as it is needed there.

I will enquire about the radio sets after going to Bombay tomorrow and will also send you some money from there in

¹ Nationalist Muslim of Punjab; then professor at Forman Christian College, Lahore

advance. We can settle the exact share of responsibility between the Centre and the province after our meeting in Bombay, which I expect will be arranged immediately after the Central Assembly elections. Of course, it must be understood that we must not lose any single seat for want of finance.

I thought that you must have raised a good sum by this time locally but from your letter and from Maulana Daud's letter it appears that nothing has been done as yet.

Regarding the draft statement proposed to be published, a copy of which is sent by you, I can only say that I cannot be a party to it or give my approval without reference to the Working Committee or to the [Congress] President. It would create unnecessary complications. Individual members are not free to make a declaration of policy in the name of the Congress. They can only express their own individual opinion. I have made my own position clear so often that there can be no misunderstanding so far as my position is concerned. But if you want me to give my approval to the statement to be issued regarding the position of the Congress on this question, that can only be done by the Working Committee. If any individual member were to do so, it would be misunderstood.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

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Poona
17 November 1945

My dear Maulana,

Your telegram about Diwan Chamanlal was duly received but I forgot to mention about it in my previous letter. When my telegram was sent to him at Lahore he was in Bombay. He came to see me here after your telegram was received and he has assured me that the Congress will have no difficulty in capturing that seat and hence he need not go to the Central Assembly from there. But if he finds that there is any danger of losing the seat he will certainly stand. I think his mind is in the province. Therefore, I have left it to him to decide as he likes.

The following resolution was placed before the Working Committee:

In view of the approaching elections, the Working Committee draw special attention to the necessity for making special arrangements for voting for the men and women in the armed forces and associated organisations. Full facilities should be provided not only for those who are in India but also for those who are stationed abroad.

In the event of any names of persons in the armed forces, who are entitled to vote, not appearing in the electoral rolls, opportunity should be given for their inclusion.

And the Working Committee simply decided that it should be referred to the Central Election Board for consideration. If you think it necessary you may write to the Viceroy. I do not think he will do anything in the matter.

Yesterday I sent you a draft manifesto for your approval as it has to be issued in the name of the Working Committee. I would suggest that you show it to Prafulla Babu also. I have sent a copy to Mr. Krjpalani. Pantji has, I believe, seen it from Jawaharlal. I will try to send a copy to the remaining members.

I do not know whether you have been able to look into the affairs of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. Nor do I know what has been done about Sarat Babu and the Forward Bloc. I understand he is going to the Centre. Has he consulted you and obtained your approval? I have received no proposals from Bengal as yet.

Please let us know about the state of your health.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Calcutta

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Poona
18 November 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

Your letter of the 12th inst. was received yesterday. Two other letters of the 13th and 15th inst. have also been received today.

You will please excuse me for my writing to you in English, but as I have very little time to write myself in Hindustani I am dictating this letter to economise time.

You may continue to write in Urdu without any hesitation. I am going to Bombay tomorrow and from there I will arrange, if possible, to give you copies [of replies] to your letters hereafter in Urdu which may be more convenient for you to understand.

Regarding your request to Mahatmaji for sending Dr. Gopichand to the Provincial Assembly, I showed your letter to him. He says that Dr. Gopichand knows his views and that he should be able to decide what he should do in this matter. My own view is that if Dr. Gopichand feels that in the interests of the province he should go to the Provincial Assembly it would be his duty to do so. He must be able to take the decision on his own responsibility. Gandhiji takes no interest in these matters. It is unnecessary to enter into the reasons as to why he has kept out of these elections. He has done so in the past also. He is therefore not inclined to give advice to anybody and his permission should not be necessary.

When we met last in Bombay I had spoken to Dr. Gopichand, and perhaps to you also, that a budget of the required expenditure for the purposes of these elections in your province should be framed as early as possible and also the portion that the Centre is expected to contribute as well as the amount expected to be raised in the province and that this should be communicated to me as early as possible. I have got it now from you as also from Dr. Gopichand. But I see from Dr. Gopichand's letter that he has shifted the whole burden on me. You will agree that it is not fair. And if all the provinces were to throw the burden in its entirety on the Centre, it would be very difficult to meet such a demand. Reasonable efforts should therefore be made locally and the Centre would undoubtedly help whatever help is needed.

About the radio sets, I will make enquiries as soon as I reach Bombay.

There may be a number of candidates who will be returned unopposed and they should be able to contribute to the local fund for election purposes. They should be asked to do so. Lahore is a fairly rich city and there are other cities also which can contribute. We will settle this matter when Dr. Gopichand comes to Bombay after the Central Assembly elections are over. In the meanwhile I will send you a substantial amount for immediate help as soon as I reach Bombay. It must be understood between us that no seats should be lost for want of money.

About the University seat, there was an application from Prof. Abdul Majid Khan about which I had written to you last week asking [for] your reactions to the same.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's visit will be over by the time this reaches you and I will be anxiously awaiting your report about the results of his tour. I trust it will clear the way for our success in the two Sikh constituencies for the Central Assembly as also raise the general tempo in favour of the Congress.

If you think that Dr. Gopichand's going to the Assembly is necessary you should be able to persuade him to do so.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Daud
Lahore

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EXTRACTS

Berhampur (Ganjam)
6 November 1945

Revered Sardar,

I think it my duty to bring to your notice a very unpleasant situation that has arisen in the districts of Ganjam and Koraput of Orissa in connection with the election to the Central Assembly. These two districts are technically in Madras for the purpose of the Central Assembly election, for it is held under the 1919 Act and Orissa was not then made a separate province. The Ganjam-cum-Vizag constituency lies in Orissa and Madras, and for that both the provinces are interested in the selection of a candidate for the same constituency. In 1935, when candidates were selected by the Congress for the general election to the Central Legislature, Sri Bhulabhai Desai, who was then organising the election, came down to Berhampur, consulted the provincial Congress committee of Orissa as well as the Andhra PCC and with the agreement of both Mr. V. V. Giri¹ of Ganjam was

¹ President of India since August 1969; gained prominence as President, All-India Railwaymen's Federation and All-India Trade Union Congress; member, Central Assembly, 1934-36; Minister of Labour, Industries, Co-operation and Commerce, Madras, 1937; first High Commissioner to Ceylon, 1947-51; Union Minister of Labour, 1952-54; resigned because of policy difference with Nehru; became successively Governor of UP, Kerala and Mysore, 1957-67; elected Vice-President in 1969; elected President in the vacancy caused by the sudden death of Dr. Zakir Husain

selected. He resigned in 1937 to come to the provincial legislature. Since then two by-elections have been held and two gentlemen of Vizagapatam district have been returned. In the present general election, the Orissa Provincial Congress Committee selected Sri Biswanath Das for that constituency in consultation and agreement with most of the Andhra Congress leaders. But the Andhra PCC had not the courtesy to approve the selection of Sri Biswanath Das in a resolution and send the recommendation to the Central Election Board. Had the ban on Sri Biswanath Das been lifted, Andhra and Orissa would probably have fought on that issue. But the ban was not lifted.

Then the Andhra PCC selected Mr. Narayanamurthy but did not consult nor even communicated the news to the Orissa PCC. This itself would not have so much offended many of us here had not the Andhra PCC thought it proper to start rival Congress committees in Orissa on the plea that some Telugu-speaking areas have been wrongly included in Orissa. The North Vizag District Congress Committee of Andhra has set up a town Congress Committee at Berhampur. This has complicated the Congress matters to a great extent. The non-Congress sections are taking advantage of this complication and depicting the Congress as an organisation inimical to the provincial interest. This is an old complaint against the Congress by a section of the people and this is taken recourse to, specially at the time of election. Recently Dr. Pattabhi and myself issued a joint statement appealing to both the Andhras and the Oriyas to keep their activities within proper limits. That statement brought upon me some accusation which are sought to be strengthened by citing the way in which the selection of the candidate for the Central Assembly has been made and the starting of the rival Congress committees in Orissa by the Andhra people.

These factors may have a direct effect on the coming provincial elections.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
H. K. Mahtab

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TELEGRAM

Poona

14 November 1945

Harekrushna Mahtab
Cuttack

YOUR LETTER SIXTH RECEIVED TODAY. PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED.

VALLABHBHAI

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Poona

14 November 1945

My dear Mahtab,

I got your letter of the 6th instant this morning. It means that it takes full one week for your letters to reach here. Urgent matters should therefore be dealt with by telephone.

What have you done about your selections of Scheduled Caste candidates? I have not received your proposals as yet.

It is unfortunate that your province is involved in a futile controversy which could have been avoided if it had been brought to my notice at an early stage. It was only from your letter received today that I understood the situation properly. Straightaway I have given a statement to the Press [See enclosure] which will clear much of the ground, but mischievous people are bound to take advantage of the situation. I trust this will be of help to you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
Cuttack

ENCLOSURE

Poona

14 November 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel has issued the following statement to the Press:

Some misunderstanding has arisen resulting in considerable dissatisfaction in the districts of Ganjam and Koraput of Orissa in connection with the selections for the Central Assembly. The Central Election Board had decided to select Sjt. Biswanath Das as the Congress nominee for this constituency, subject to his disqualification being removed by the Government of India. But as the orders for the non-removal of his disqualification were received at a very late stage and as there was no time, the Central Election Board had to sanction the recommendation made by the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee. It was unfortunate that the Andhra committee made its proposal without reference to the Orissa Congress Committee. If the Central Election Board had time and had known about this before, it would have taken steps to consult the Orissa committee before making its decision. The rights of the Orissa committee are in no way affected or prejudiced by this selection and I wish to assure the Orissa committee that if any such occasion arises in future, steps will be taken to fully safeguard its rights and privileges. Sjt. Biswanath Das' disqualification not being removed and no other suitable Oriya candidate from the Board's point of view being available for consideration, the decision was taken when there was no time left for further reference.

It is not possible for any individual MLA¹ to do anything on his own initiative with regard to the boundaries of provinces without obtaining sanction from his party, and therefore any claim made on behalf of any such candidate would be of no avail. I trust therefore that this will clear any misunderstanding that may have arisen on account of the attitude of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee or the decision of the Central Election Board.

From the accounts of Orissa Congressmen I understand that the North Vizag district committee of Andhra has set up a town Congress committee at Berhampur. This, if true, is an unnecessary complication created at this stage and steps will be taken to rectify the matter by the Working Committee as soon as possible.

¹ Member, Legislative Assembly

Under the circumstances I appeal to Orissa Congressmen to stop this controversy and support the Central Board's nominee wholeheartedly in the election. We are passing through a period of serious crisis in the history of our country and Congressmen can ill afford to raise controversies over minor issues. They must present a united front and try to secure an overwhelming majority in the provincial elections which are of vital importance to the country as a whole. It was Orissa which gave the first signal of victory in the last elections. It has made tremendous sacrifices and gone through unparalleled suffering through the past three years. People on the whole are wholeheartedly for the Congress and it is for the Congress to reap the benefit of mass awakening.

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Kudla

8 November 1945

My dear Sardarji,

Allow me to thank you for your very kind and consoling letter. Even the Congressmen of Orissa are awfully annoyed with the treatment meted out to the Utkal PCC by the Andhra in nominating one for the Vizag, Ganjam and Koraput districts. This area includes Vizag, and Andhra district with about 60% voters while it has Ganjam and Koraput with about 40% voters and also having a fairly good number of Oriya voters in the Vizag district. No Oriya has been returned from this constituency ever since its inception in 1920. The non-acceptance of my nomination even before the rejection by the Governor-General of my petition has been resented by Congressmen and taken up by the Oriya reactionaries as a platform to rake up Oriya and Andhra feelings....

District by-elections are going on in Orissa. In Balasore district all Congress candidates are returned uncontested. In the districts of Cuttack out of 32 seats, 23 are already uncontested. In Sambalpur district 8 seats are uncontested. In the districts Puri and Ganjam there is contest with the Communists and also with the reactionaries. Results are awaited and will be intimated in due course.

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
Biswanath Das

Poona

16 November 1945

My dear Biswanath Das,

I have received your letter of the 8th instant. I am sorry to find that Congressmen in Orissa have been upset by the decision of the Central Election Board regarding the Central Assembly nominee of Ganjam district. The Central Board's position has been made clear by me in my statement to the Press published yesterday which you must have read and which I trust must have given satisfaction to all concerned. If I had known this before I could easily have taken steps to redress their legitimate grievances. Whatever the Andhra committee may have done, the selection made by the Central Board was only after the rejection of your application by the Governor-General.

The District Board elections have shown splendid results. The general feeling of the people is indicated by these elections, but Congress workers are not disciplined properly and some of them are always on the lookout for an opportunity to create trouble to serve their own ends.

In the matter of selections of candidates for the Provincial Assembly, it is open to you and Mr. Mahtab to recommend only those whom you consider to be loyal and faithful to the Congress. The atmosphere of united action should not be allowed to be disturbed by people working on party lines.

You must have noticed that some people in Utkal have formed an association at Jamshedpur. This association has passed a resolution which contains a vulgar attack on Mr. Mahtab. They have sent me a copy. I do not know who these people are, but evidently attempts are being made in your province by disgruntled groups to create trouble.

I do not know exactly when the period of your disqualification is to expire but there must be some candidate selected for the Provincial Assembly who would be willing to make way by vacating his seat for you whenever he is asked to do so. We would have escaped much of these difficulties if your disqualification had not come in the way and your services had been available

to us for legislative work. I know that you will do your best even from outside, but your position as the leader of the Assembly Party would have spared us all this trouble.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Biswanath Das
Berhampur

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TELEGRAM

Cuttack
10 November 1945

Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

DIFFICULTY SUPPORTING NARAYANAMURTHY. INTIMATE YOUR OFFICE LETTER DATED EIGHTH.

SECRETARY UTKAL PCC

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TELEGRAM

Poona
9 November 1945

Harekrushna Mahtab
Secretary
Provincial Congress
Cuttack

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED UTKAL PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE NOT YET OFFICIALLY SUPPORTING NARAYANAMURTHY CENTRAL ASSEMBLY. PLEASE TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS HIS RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT. WIRE REPLY.

VALLABHBHAI

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TELEGRAM

Cuttack

12 November 1945

Sardar Patel
Poona

YOUR WIRE. PLEASE REFER MY LETTER DATED 6TH. WE SUPPORT
NARAYANAMURTHY.

MAHTAB

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Poona

• 13 November 1945

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 9th. I have already written to Mr. [Harekrushna] Mahtab about it and he wires to me that they have decided to support Mr. Narayanamurthy. So there will be no difficulty.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

B.V.N. Satyanarayana
Secretary
Berhampur Andhra Town Congress Committee

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Poona

11 November 1945

My dear Mahtab,

I get no reports from you or from anybody in your province. What is this quarrel about Mr. Narayanamurthy's nomination for the Central Assembly from the Ganjam constituency? It seems some people from your province are not accepting the decision loyally. The time for election is very close and you must settle this controversy and ask the local Congress committee in your

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province to support his candidature. The Congress must not lose this seat.

Your report about the Provincial Assembly proposals is awaited. I hope you are contesting all the seats, including the Muslim and special constituencies.

What have you done about the Depressed Classes seats? The panel elections¹ must be very near. Their proposals have not yet been received.

One of the seats for the Central Assembly has been secured unopposed. I have heard nothing about the other. Who is opposing our candidate? Is there any difficulty or is the contest serious? Please send me a full report immediately.

You must keep on writing to me at intervals, giving me information of your province at least till the elections are over.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
Cuttack

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Cuttack
21 November 1945

Revered Sardarji,

Received your letters of the 11th and 14th instant. I replied to you by wire that the last date for the publication of the final electoral roll is 20 January and the dates for nomination etc. have not yet been announced. The Governor recently said in a speech that in this province the elections may be held a little later than in other provinces because of the delay in the preparation of the electoral roll. So there is no urgency in making our recommendations.

I am really sorry I could not write to you regularly as I ought to have done. A week or two after the lifting of the ban on the Congress committees Government ordered elections of district boards of all the districts and we had to be very busy in that connection. Now in four districts out of five D.B. elections are over and in the fifth, the elections will be held on 19 December. In four districts, the Congress has come out with flying colours defeating the Radical Democratic Party in one

¹ Primary elections to choose a panel of candidates

district and the Communists in another. In the district of Balasore, all the seats we won uncontested. In Puri, Communists in a party contested the Congress and only yesterday the result was out. All the Communist candidates have been badly defeated and some of them have forfeited their deposit money. In Cuttack the Radical Democratic Party set up some candidates and they too have been defeated. The election in Ganjam will take place on the 19th, and Biswanath Babu is busy in that connection. There too we will have to encounter the Communist menace.

As regards the Central Assembly election, there are two contests, one entirely our own and the other jointly with the Andhra PCC. As regards the Cuttack-Puri constituency, there is no doubt that Bhagirathi Mahapatra, our candidate, will sweep the polls and our aim is to have the opponent's deposit money forfeited. The opponent is the head of the Radical Democratic Party here and I think it is only here that the Radicals have set up a candidate for the Central Assembly. He has brought some professional women volunteers from Calcutta and this has gone against him all the more.

As regards the Ganjam-Vizag constituency, Narayanamurthy will surely succeed. Your statement has fully cleared the atmosphere and the provincialists are now silenced.

I think I ought to keep you informed of a move that we have adopted here. Here generally the anti-Congress parties are formed at the instance of the big landholders. This time I have somehow brought round some of these Rajas at least to remain neutral. It is for this reason that Nilkantha and the so-called Forward Bloc people are unable to form parties for elections. I think I shall see that no organised party remains to contest the Congress in the coming provincial elections. Of course we will contest all the seats including the special ones—Scheduled Castes, Muslims, landholder, commerce, labour—all the seats. I shall let you know the whole thing when we meet. I must meet you and discuss with you everything at least a month before the election.

With regard to Singbhum in Bihar, we have some claim there and I am in correspondence with Rajendra Babu over the matter. I hope the matter will be settled without reference to you.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
H. Mahtab

Poona

14 November 1945

My dear Dr. Pattabhi & My dear Pṛakasam,

You must have noticed that a good deal of discontent has arisen in the Gaṇjam and Koraput districts of Orissa in connection with the Central Assembly nomination. It would have been better if your committee had consulted the Orissa committee. Mischievous people have taken advantage of this and started parties against the Congress in Orissa. The district committee of North Vizag has created a further difficulty by setting up a town Congress committee at Berhampur. Such complications should have been avoided during elections. Orissa province has suffered much on account of factions during the last three years. Some of those dissatisfied in the matter of selections are naturally taking advantage of this situation. Please do something to help the Orissa people in their difficulty. If necessary, run up to the place and settle the affairs by satisfying them in their legitimate grievance.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

EXTRACT

Chandni Chauk
Cuttack

28 December 1945

My dear Vallabhbhaiji,

I was very much touched with your friendly letter of 3 November 1945 and it went a long way to soothe my disturbed state of mind at the time. Your friendly words were like a breath of zephyr bringing humane touch which I had missed in the way things were handled by local gents here.

It is true I have been suffering from blood pressure these four years and with the inhuman sufferings of the Congress and

the country I was no doubt in a bad condition in 1944-45. It is also equally true that my health improved very much as soon as Mahatmaji and most of you Congress leaders were released. Somehow my health was the barometer of the great national depression but it is quite untrue that I ever had a stroke in the Central Assembly Hall or elsewhere. . . .

With the release of Congressmen last September, many a cock and bull story went about and I mention here just one or two. It was given out that those, who did not go to jail in the 1942 movement, are traitors and should not be allowed any office and they talked of the secret circular of the High Command. About me it was talked that Sardar Patel had noted B. Das' non-attendance in the Assembly and did not want him to continue. Most cruelly and unfortunately such scandalous news came through young Congress workers and it did hurt me at the time. I wrote a letter to Bhulabhaji (copies of the letter of 4 October to Bhulabhaji and his reply of 12 October are enclosed). In a previous letter (of 23 September) I wrote to Bhulabhaji as follows:

"I enclose herewith a copy of my application to Acharya Kripalani for selection as Congress candidate for the Central Assembly from the Cuttack-cum-Puri district non-Mohamadan constituency of Orissa province for your valued recommendation to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who now is placed by the Working Committee in charge of the election sub-committee work. There is a spirit of intolerance and impatience amongst the younger section of Congress workers that old-stagers need not be even Congress Parliamentarians, but I always thought our long memory and long range of thought and action entitle us to be the best counsellors to the Congress and the country. I can scent a similar spirit of impatience all over India, but this is a phase that has to be experienced through. That is why I ask you not only to recommend my name in writing to Vallabhbhaiji but also to speak to him personally."

You may verify through Sri Prakasaji, who was secretary of the Congress Assembly Party, if the story that I had a stroke had any truth in it. The Statesman of 17 November, 1945, in its Orissa Newsletter gave another version:

"Mr. B. Das' application has been rejected because of his ill-health. It is said that Mr. Das could not actually attend

the voting once during the last session of the Assembly due to high blood pressure from which he is suffering."

It was strange, very strange, that the local Parliamentary Board at no time told me of your intentions, not even when they accepted my application and recommended my name unanimously to you. The secretary wrote to me on 13 October 1945:

"... the Utkal Selection Board has recommended favourably to the Central Election Board and you can now proceed in your election campaign as you think best."

Your wire rejecting my candidature was conveyed to me at 7 p.m. on 20 October. I put some query to the secretary of the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee on the 22nd (copy of letter enclosed) to which I had no reply. Simultaneously I wrote a letter to Mr. Mahtab taking him then as a member of the Working Committee. Copy of the letter and his reply enclosed.

I have obeyed your orders. You will see from my letter of 4 October to Bhulabhaiji how much I hold you in high esteem. Let me tell you, now that politics is out of my head and I do not worry over things, that I am very much better. I apologise that I showed impatience and sent you and others so many wires over my rejection as a parliamentary candidate. I must confess I felt floored at the time. Now I am thankful to God and to you that I am having a respite from big political worries; perhaps because I was a keen political student I used to feel too much.

But I seek redress over my personal honour with the Congress High Command. If I was and I am a trusted Congressman and a true patriot I again acknowledge with gratitude your very friendly appreciation of my past services to the Congress and the country. The local selection board, which knew your mind before, ought to have told me of it than my suddenly knowing of it from an extract of your telegram on the evening of 20 October 1945. Incidentally, it explains the psychology of my frantic telegrams and letters. Surely I remain a patriot and national worker even now. I feel I was not treated by the local selection board or those who were in close negotiations with you with the courtesy, consideration and respect due to a party man and an elderly statesman.

What I ask for is an honourable appreciation of the situation. Any enquiry will reveal that an old loyal Congressman and patriot has been inflicted with deep humiliation and rough usage that

his past services to the nation did not warrant nor his social position did justify such offhand dealings. I seek an honourable appreciation of that position.

With my warm respects,

Yours sincerely,
B. Das

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel .
Congress House
Girgaon
Bombay

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Bombay
6 January 1946

My dear B. Das,

I have received your letter of 28 December and I am glad that my previous letter of 3 November has, to some extent, soothed your feelings. I wish to assure you once again that the only reason for the non-acceptance of your candidature was the consideration of your health. There is nothing else against you. I was grieved to find that your feelings were ruffled and that you felt hurt that you were omitted. The Congress organisation is growing much stronger and, God willing, there will be many more openings for Congressmen to serve the country in more responsible positions in various spheres in the near future. The Congress will need the services of experienced people like you, as it has been suffering from want of good and able men who can shoulder the responsibility of administration. You must get well as soon as possible and be ready when the time comes for such a call.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. B. Das
Cuttack

CHAPTER IV
MADRAS—COCKPIT OF FACTIONS

186

Madras
28 September 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I was too late when I tried to get at you. You had left for Poona. I hope you are maintaining at least the same level of health.

The enclosed is a milder version of the Central story in the Andhra Patrika for which Dr. P.'s friends are responsible. The impression sought to be created is that Dr. P. has been pitched upon by you as leader, and that it is an integral part of the big plan!

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Madras
1 December 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

This is to confirm my telegram. I am sending you a copy of the resolution adopted by 143 prominent Congressmen of the province, PCC members and others. They are sending a deputation consisting of Dr. Rajan, A. Vaidyanatha Iyer of Madura, A. Vedarathnam (Salt Satyagraha, Vedaranyam), C. Perumal-swami Reddiar, President, North Arcot District Congress Committee, and M. C. Veerbahu Pillai, AICC member for Tinnevely. They are all very eager to meet you and explain matters. Kindly give them a full hearing at some convenient time.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS

COPY OF RESOLUTION

As members of the Tamil Nad Provincial Congress Committee and men who have given of their best to the Congress for over two decades, we feel much concerned over the state of Congress affairs in our province. We have read Sri Annamalai Pillai's letter dated 16 November 1945 to the President, Indian National Congress, and we entirely agree with him in what he has stated therein. In spite of our wholehearted acceptance at face value of the Tamil Nadu Congress President's assurance in his introductory statement at the meeting of the provincial Congress Committee held at Madura on 31 October last, the vacancies in the Provincial Congress Committee, about thirty in number, were filled by co-option in a partisan spirit and our suspicions were strengthened by the determination shown by the group now in power in the provincial Congress committee to exclude Rajaji from the provincial Congress committee.

We are therefore of opinion and strongly urge on the Congress Working Committee that a representative and strong parliamentary provincial board should be set up for Tamil Nad and the selections and recommendations should not be left to the sole discretion of the present working committee of the province.

It is our considered view that parliamentary work in this province requires Rajaji's leadership.

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The Cricket Club of India Ltd.
Brabourne Stadium
Bombay
8 November 1945

My dear Sardarji,

I hope to reach Poona some time on the morning of the 14th (Wednesday) and would very much like to see you. I shall be grateful if you will be so good as to let me know when I could come to the clinic and meet you. I do not want to take up much of your time than would be necessary, but what I wish to get

your advice upon might take from 30 minutes to an hour. I hope very much that you will be so good as to afford me this opportunity. I have always looked upon you as an adviser in time of stress and my visits to you in Bombay in the old days offered me great relief and joy.

I would like to see Bapu as well but that will only be for about a quarter of an hour mainly to have darshan of him. That gives me peace. I will, if I am allowed, see him after I have seen you.

I trust you have been well, and the treatment at the nature clinic has improved you, and your pain has abated. Please remember me to Smt. Maniben.

With pranams to you and Bapu.

Yours very sincerely,
P. Subbarayan

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

189

Poona
9 November 1945

My dear Dr. Subbarayan,

I have received your letter of the 8th inst. I shall certainly be delighted to see you here on the 14th any time after 2 p.m.

The rejection of Mrs. Subbarayan's candidature ought not to make the slightest difference between our friendship and you can always look to me for any advice you may want at any time. No rumours or stories about her rejection should be given credence to by you or by her. My opinion about both of you remains the same. I have spoken to Bapu about your coming on the 14th and he will certainly see you for a few minutes.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. P. Subbarayan
The Cricket Club of India Ltd.
Brabourne Stadium
Bombay

4 Kondi Chetty Street
George Town
Madras
12 November 1945

Dear Sardarji,

Reports reach me that you have not been able to exactly make out the situation in Tamil Nad in relation to the happenings at the Tripura Nukundram Tamil Nad Congress Committee meeting.

The issue before Tamil Nad is simple and clear. Rajaji wants to become the premier again. Tamil Nad does not want him and has no confidence in his leadership. Every other thing spoken or written about is only a smokescreen thrown up to confuse the people outside. 177 out of 194 members of the TNCC attended the meeting. The Rajaji group brought into action all Tammany Hall methods possible to secure support. Several thousands of rupees were spent, members were sought to be bribed, cajoled, coerced or talked into. The net result was that they could not get a majority in the TNCC for a resolution in favour of Rajaji. Finding an overwhelming majority against Rajaji's leadership, the leaders of the Rajaji group agreed to withdraw their resolutions. At the very last minute they did their best and ultimately accepted defeat. Only one decisive issue arose for voting, namely, the co-option of members to the TNCC. There the Working Committee's supporters secured 36 out of the 37 places. The one was Sri A. Vaidyanatha Iyer who has since resigned.

After this crushing defeat, propaganda was set afoot as if some compromise had been arrived at behind the scenes. You must have read the interview by Sri K. Kamaraj Nadar, President of the TNCC to the API categorically denying it. Sri Kamaraj only made a statement at the opening of the TNCC meeting welcoming Rajaji back into the Congress and seeking his co-operation.

As for the operative resolutions passed at the TNCC meeting there are two. One confirmed the action of the TNCC invalidating the election of C. Rajagopalachari to PCC from Trichengode. The other one vested complete powers in the Tamil

Nad Congress Working Committee to do all things for the Provincial Assembly elections.

You will thus note that we, for our part, have still no confidence in Rajaji's leadership, and are not prepared to entrust the affairs of the province in his hands, in view of his past as well as his present attitude.

Yours sincerely,
C. N. Muthuranga Mudaliar

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Poona
16 November 1945

My dear Muthuranga Mudaliar,

I have received your letter of 12th instant which gives me the full official point of view of the Tamil Nad Congress Committee. From the papers it was difficult to obtain any coherent idea of the situation. The general impression created outside from the Press reports was that there was some sort of understanding arrived at between Rajaji and the president of the Tamil Nad Congress Committee. I saw the contradiction by Sjt. Kamaraj Nadar subsequently, but it does not seem to be consistent with his previous speech at the opening of the Tamil Nad Congress Committee. However, if in fact there is nothing in it, so much misunderstanding should not have been allowed to be created for such a long time.

I trust that the election campaign is going on smoothly and efficiently.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. N. Muthuranga Mudaliar
4 Kondi Chetty Street
G.T., Madras

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Madras
15 November 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I hope this will reach you in Poona. Thank you for your kind note of the 6th.

You will read my letter to Bapu. Kamaraj is, I am afraid, playing a deceitful game. With friends who talk to him about me, he pleads for time to extricate himself from his erstwhile companions. Though he is obviously deceiving, I am giving him the time, taking all he says at face value.

He signed and sent me a draft which he said he would read at the Madura meeting of the PCC. But he did not fulfil his promise. He omitted vital matters and acted contrary to his proposed intentions. He now explains his default as due to want of sufficient boldness to break off suddenly from his friends.

I had asked those who gathered there and who were wanting to do many things on my behalf to drop everything. As many as 75 members out of a total of 175 members present had actually signed and given a requisition for resolutions supporting me and opposing the campaign against me. But my friends on my advice accepted Kamaraj's plea for peace and withdrew all their propositions. But on his part he immediately failed to keep up and filled the PCC with 30 or 35 co-opted members, all opposed to me, and ever since is repeating his double game. He has done nothing to execute his promise to end the conflict.

I fear the province will go into the hands of criminals. This may appear to be strong language but I tell you it is just that and nothing else. Intimidation and corruption will be ruling. They do not want one who will not yield to these things and who has public support of his own.

You say you are pained to note the developments here and wish to know how you can help. I know you can help if you make up your mind. They are still carrying on a whispering propaganda campaign that you are behind the move to destroy me!

You will ruin this fair province if you allow the present Tamil Nad Working Committee to manage the selections. The Andhras will manage their own province all right, but they will not do the right thing nor can they, in regard to the Tamil districts. If you select and set up a sound parliamentary board for this province, the atmosphere will be clarified. If you desire my assistance in this, I can advise you.

Anyway, love.

Raja
[Rajagopalachari]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

27 November 1945

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 24th inst. I am surprised that such stories are circulated in your province and is believed by other people. Shri Rajagopalachari is one of my dearest friends and life-long colleague. It is a black lie to say that I am not willing to allow him into the legislature and that I have expressed such opinion to Sjt. V. V. Giri. You can write to Sjt. Giri about it and I am sure he will flatly contradict it, because I have never to him or to anybody expressed such an opinion. I would any day welcome Rajaji's coming back to the legislature, because I know that he is head and shoulders above all Congressmen in the province in ability, integrity and sincerity. All I can say is that I am distressed to find that such stupid rumours are circulated about responsible people and credence is given by Congressmen to such stories.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. K. Sivagurusami
8/12 Somasundra Road
Coimbatore

22 December 1945

The President
Tamil Nad Congress Committee

Dear Friend,

I have been asked by a Christian friend to consider the following suggestions for Christian candidates from Tamil Nad for the Madras Legislative Assembly:

Tamil Nad: For Madras: Dr. Ramchandra Rao. He is an old Congressman. Though a Protestant, he will get active help from my Catholic friends. He is well liked and am assured, will be well supported. Catholic votes are about 60 per cent in this

constituency. He is well to do and will not need any financial help; he assures me he will stand only if he is adopted as a Congress candidate.

He is eligible for the Upper House as well. But here perhaps one Mr. Jerome Saldanha of Mangalore (present sitting member) will fight and win. If you nominate Dr. Ramchandra Rao for the Lower House from Madras, I will try and get Jerome Saldanha to sign our pledge for the Upper House seat.

For Tuticorin seat: Mr. Victoria Roche (present sitting member). He should come in again, is well to do and rather ambitious, I hear: Good man, and will win.

For women's seat: Mrs. Masilamani Pillay (present sitting member)—old and tried Congresswoman—will win. Local people may wish to displace this lady; but I would request you to kindly check this tendency. In the South, where Catholics predominate, we should select Catholics as a rule, because they have no chance in any other province.

For the other Christian seats in Tamil Nad, I will be sending you details soon. So far there are some differences among my Congress friends.

On the West Coast: Mangalore etc.: Mr. L. C. Pias, of Court Road, Mangalore. A well-to-do lawyer and Congressman of standing; been in local municipality for years and resigned in 1942 at our bidding with 30 other Congressmen. He will be opposed by one Mr. O. L. Lobo, whom we hope to defeat, though the fight will be stiff.

From here, Mr. Felix Albuquerque will also apply for the Congress ticket. He is a good young man too and wealthy, but he owns a liquor distillery and is not so very popular—specially in Br. Cochin where vote is heavy.

Mr. Albuquerque may be preferred by the local committee, but I would urge the case of Pias as more acceptable to the constituency.

Please let me know your opinion about these suggestions.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

20 December 1945

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 4th instant on my return from Calcutta. I am surprised that you take exception to my having expressed my honest opinion about the mischievous and false rumours that were being spread in your province about my attitude towards Rajaji's leadership, in reply to a letter that was written to me by some Congressman from South India, whom I did not know. He was entitled to have a reply and I have given it to him as it was due from one Congressman to another. Your interpretation of that letter is wholly unfounded. There is no desire on my part of forcing him in your midst as you suggest in your letter, but you cannot expect me to suppress my opinion if it is asked for, especially when I was told that my name was being exploited for making propaganda against Rajaji's return to the Congress.

I do not believe for a moment that the Congress should close its doors against people who have taken no part in the last struggle. All our sacrifices would be in vain if we would not absorb talents at our disposal and decided to close its doors against people who have rendered services in the past and made sacrifices more than we have done during our time, simply because on one occasion they differed from us.

My opinion about C. R. given in that letter was not intended for publication. It was written in reply to a letter received from a Congressman. But I stand by every word of what I have said in that letter. You talk of hatred for his leadership in your letter, which will perhaps not allow you to appreciate or understand my viewpoint. We have worked together practically for a lifetime and we know each other's worth. We have differed occasionally on vital matters but difference of opinion, however strong and unpleasant, had not affected nor will it affect in the future our regards and affection as well as our understanding of each other. You cannot expect me to suppress my opinion about his worth but the question of leadership does not rest with me.

It rests entirely with the province and nobody from outside wants to impose him if he is not wanted.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

D. R. Arunachalam, Esq.
Devakottai
S. India .

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20 December 1945

My dear Dr. Subbarayan,

I had your letter of the 3rd inst. at Calcutta.

I hope Mr. Asaf Ali's efforts will straighten the affairs in Tamil Nad. The atmosphere there, as far as I can judge from letters that are being received, is not suitable yet for any good and useful work, for which a peaceful atmosphere is required. I feel that the political water is very muddy and some people are bent upon stirring this. We have done our best to help in settling it down. We are awaiting with anxiety and interest the results of Mr. Asaf Ali's efforts. We do not desire to see the province of Tamil Nad being a cockpit of parties and factions. If all of you can contribute in that direction and help our nominee, who is there, it would be a good beginning made.

Hope you both are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. P. Subbarayan
Tiruchengodu
Salem Dist.

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Madras
23 December 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Many thanks for your kind letter.
Asaf is going to you by air.
He will tell you what he has done.

Unless you help him with your practical wisdom and firmness, I wonder what the poor man will do. He has given some decisions and reserved some.

Here is a copy of a telegram I have [sent] to Maulana Sahib on account of difficulties created by his decision on the Tiruchengodu election.

I am writing in haste.

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

ENCLOSURE

TELEGRAM

Madras
23 December 1945

Maulana Azad
19A Ballygunj Circular Road
Calcutta

ASAFALI DECLARED TIRUCHENGODU ELECTION VALID UNTIL SET ASIDE BY DULY CONSTITUTED ELECTION TRIBUNAL. PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE HAS ISSUED PRESS STATEMENT SAYING IT NOW INTENDS APPOINTING TRIBUNAL THIS LATE STAGE. ASAFALI FULLY AND CAREFULLY WENT THROUGH ALL MATERIALS. I FEEL HE IS IN POSITION TO STATE THERE IS NO REASONABLE GROUND WHATEVER FOR FURTHER ENQUIRY BY TRIBUNAL THIS LATE STAGE. PRAY OBTAIN HIS REMARKS AND IMMEDIATELY ORDER NO TRIBUNAL PERMISSIBLE BECAUSE EXECUTIVE THAT RAISED OBJECTION SUOMOTO FAILED APPOINT TRIBUNAL IN TIME. PROLONGATION CONTROVERSY MOST DETRIMENTAL AND WHOLLY WANTING BONAFIDES. NO OBJECTION LODGED BY ANY CONGRESS MEMBER IN CONSTITUENCY WITHIN SEVEN DAYS OF ELECTION AS PER CONGRESS CONSTITUTION ARTICLE ELEVEN.

RAJAGOPALACHARI

EXTRACT

Trichinopoly
24 December 1945

Dear Vallabhbhai,

I am leaving Madras for Trichinopoly today and write as from there. There is an impression that Sri Kamaraj Nadar has been saying that if a composite parliamentary board is formed, he would have no objection provided Rajaji is not in it. Any board, even though otherwise composite, will not in my opinion be satisfactory. It will only create fresh difficulties. If he is in it the difficulties will be reduced to the minimum.

A small board consisting of Rajaji with two others, say, Annamalai Pillai, PCC Secretary, and C.P. Subbiah, member, PCC Working Committee, on the one side, and Kamaraj with any two of his choice [on the other] will be quite an efficient committee. If desired we can increase by one member on each side. . . .

Yours sincerely,
T.S.S. Rajan¹

Sjt Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

26 December 1945

My dear Dr. Rajan,

I have just received your letter of the 24th instant. Mr. Asaf Ali has returned and reported to me in detail as to what happened at Madras during his visit. It is unfortunate that he has not been able to settle the differences and no clear way has been found out. This morning I received a telegram from Sri. Kamaraj Nadar which is hardly helpful and I am sure things

¹ Elected to Central Assembly, 1935; Health Minister in Rajaji Ministry in Madras, 1937; resigned from Congress, 1938

are getting worse. However, Mr. Asaf Ali will have to go and report the matter to the President.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. T.S.S. Rajan
Trichinopoly

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TELEGRAM

Madras
24 December 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

WE FEEL ANY PARLIAMENTARY BOARD WITHOUT RAJAJI EVEN IF MADE OTHERWISE COMPOSITE WILL NOT WORK AND WILL INCREASE DIFFICULTIES DOCTOR RAJAN PERUMALSAMI REDDIAR VEERABAHU VEDARATNAM MEMBERS TAMILNAD DEPUTATION ANNAMALAI PILLAI PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY SUBBIAH PROVINCIAL WORKING COMMITTEE MEMBER.

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4 Molony Road
Thyagarayanagar
Madras
26 December 1945

Dear Sardarji,

I am herewith enclosing a copy of the memorandum presented by me to Sri. Asaf Ali, member, WC¹, deputed to enquire into Tamil Nadu affairs. I hope you will go through the memorandum carefully and see that justice is done to the official Congress in Tamil Nadu.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
C. N. Muthuranga

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS FROM C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIAR'S LETTER TO ASAF ALI

Rajaji's differences with the Congress High Command began at the AICC meeting held in May 1942 at Allahabad. Rajaji thereafter threatened the High Command that if his advice was not taken Tamil Nadu would not be with the Congress. He announced that he would carry on propaganda for his views. On being informed that so long as he was a member of the Working Committee and the AICC he could not flout the decision of the AICC, he resigned his membership of the WC and indulged in a raging and tearing propaganda for Pakistan in Tamil Nadu. Sri S. Satyamurthi, the then secretary of the TNCC, wrote to the President of the Congress that Rajaji was carrying on propaganda against the Congress and that disciplinary action might be taken against him.

Rajaji, however, continued to do propaganda against the August resolution and criticised the Congress attitude towards the Cripps proposals and advocated office acceptance for what it was worth even though power was not given in the Centre.

There seems to be an impression that if Rajaji goes Tamil Nadu will become leaderless. Tamil Nadu's position will not be like that of a calf which has lost its mother-cow and it does not suffer from dearth of leaders.

I hope that Tamil Nadu alone will not be treated as the Cinderella of the Congress and made to do things that are unconstitutional and undemocratic. It will make Tamil Nadu workers, who are the backbone of the Congress movement and who have made enormous sacrifice in the cause of freedom, very sore and disgusted.

26 December 1945

My dear Muthuranga Mudaliar,

I have received your letter without date today enclosing a copy of the memorandum given by you to Mr. Asaf Ali who was deputed to enquire into Tamil Nadu affairs by the Working Committee. I am surprised that a man of your position and experience should have made references in the memorandum which, to say the least, have no bearing on the subject. There is no

question of imposing leadership from above. This point has been made clear so often by Mr. Asaf Ali as well as by those to whom the matter was referred on various occasions from South India. The question of giving a panel of names for the executive council from amongst leaders of the Congress was entirely a different matter and your reference to it is out of place. It was a confidential affair which cannot be openly discussed with you in correspondence. I cannot say anything about its accuracy because it would lead me into disclosures of a most confidential nature. I can only say that your reference is most inappropriate and irrelevant.

I do not know what matters were referred to me about some minor differences in the Andhra PCC¹ to which you have made a reference in your memorandum. No different treatment has been given to you and your complaint is absolutely unjustified. The principle of provinces being autonomous is generally accepted, but the central control for the general good, efficient and just administration is inherent in the constitution and such powers vest in the Working Committee which functions during the absence of the AICC for that body.

If there is an impression that if Rajaji goes Tamil Nad will be leaderless, that impression has not been created by us from above. If that impression exists it must be because the facts must be unchallengeable. The general practice of setting up candidates for the purpose of elections is well known but the fact that numerous complaints are being received from your province about the desirability of certain persons being included or at least not being excluded on technical grounds cannot be ignored.

The analogy of the expulsion of Communists also does not hold good. We would have taken all the Communists into our fold in the Congress without any hesitation if they had agreed to abide by the decisions and the discipline of the Congress in the future. We were prepared to forget the past. Your memorandum discloses an unfortunate suspicion against the Congress High Command and an unnecessary prejudice against those who want to return to the Congress.

You are one of the oldest Congress leaders of Tamil Nad.

You know Rajaji as much as I do. Nobody regrets his attitude during the last three/four years more than myself. But the question of his return to the Congress must be considered without bitterness, without suspicion and purely from the point of

¹ Pradesh Congress Committee

the interest of the province alone. If there is a volume of opinion in favour of his return to the Congress it would be foolish and unwise to prevent him from coming back on technical grounds. Why can't your Congress committee decide the issue on merits instead of taking shelter on technical grounds? On the very first day when this matter was brought to my notice by Mr. Bhaktavatsalam and his company who saw me in Bombay soon after my return from Simla I told him that the question of imposition of leadership does not arise at all. It is for the province to decide, but the issue must be decided purely on merits and not on technical grounds. I find that all along your committee is trying to prevent Rajaji's coming into the provincial Congress committee merely on technical grounds. Surely he has served the Congress for a very long period with considerable sacrifices, loyalty, integrity and ability. We all cannot forget his past altogether. If he had not differed from us the question would not have arisen at all. But his differences or his actions during the last three years cannot be a permanent bar to his return to the Congress if he is prepared to abide by the discipline and decisions of the Congress in the future. As he did so, he was taken as a representative of the Congress in the Viceregal conference at Simla along with other Congress leaders. I can only advise you with an unbiased mind and for a single purpose, namely, the good of the province. I have not met a single man from your province who has up to now questioned his ability, integrity, honesty and sincerity in spite of the differences with him. I am sure if you will consider this matter without prejudice you will agree with me that his loss to the Congress will not be compensated by any efforts to somehow fill the gap. All the anxiety of doing justice to those who have differed from us during the past three years must not be meant or interpreted as an undue interference or as an act of partiality towards Rajaji.

I have received a telegram from Sri Kamaraj Nadar this morning containing a veiled threat. This telegram also must have been sent with your approval or consent. I am afraid if you are all acting under a terrible fear complex as disclosed in that telegram, Tamil Nad will have a very bad future.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

C.N. Muthuranga Mudaliar
Madras

TELEGRAM

Madras

26 December 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

STRONG RUMOURS CURRENT HERE REGARDING NATURE OF RECOMMENDATION TO BE MADE BY ASAFALI TO HIGH COMMAND. HOPE HIGH COMMAND WILL TAKE NO DECISIONS THEREON WITHOUT CONSULTING ME AND MY COMMITTEE. MY WORKING COMMITTEE EMPHASISES THAT MATTERS ON WHICH ASAFALI MIGHT REPORT ARE EXCLUSIVELY WITHIN PROVINCE OF PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE. ANY DECISIONS IMPOSED ON THEM CONTRARY TO STATEMENTS MADE BY YOU AND ASAFALI HIMSELF WHEN HERE ARE I AM BOUND TO INFORM YOU LIKELY TO HAVE UNFORTUNATE REPERCUSSIONS.

KAMARAJ NADAR

26 December 1945

Dear Mr. Kamaraj,

I received your telegram this morning which came to me as a surprise. The Working Committee naturally is anxious to see that the atmosphere in the province is settled before the elections. But it is unfortunate that your attitude is not helpful at all. Your telegram contains a veiled threat of indiscipline if not of revolt. There is no question of imposing any decisions from above but you and your colleagues must realise that the Working Committee has also a responsibility and it cannot abdicate its functions if it has been approached by as many as about one-third of the members of your provincial Congress committee. It is but natural that we should like to see the formation of a Parliamentary Board for your province so constituted as to include all groups and interests as far as possible leaving no ground for any reasonable complaint. Mr. Asaf Ali was sent to your province to bring about an amicable settlement. Instead of being helpful

to him, some of you have thought it proper to threaten indiscipline and to refuse to listen to any advice given purely in the interests of the province. You are aware that the decisions in the matter of selection of candidates rests with the Central Parliamentray Board. If the local selection Board does not represent all important claims and interests, it would naturally throw a greater burden on the centre and create difficulties for smooth working. Will you point out any instance or action on [our] part from which you can suggest the slightest inference for a desire to impose decision on your committee. All I can say is that your telegram was wholly unexpected and uncalled for.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Mr. Kamaraj Nadar
Madras

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TELEGRAM

Madras
27 December 1945

Asaf Ali
Faiz Bazar
Delhi

SORRY TO HAVE TO INFORM YOU KAMARAJ WHO PROMISED IN YOUR ROOM TO MEET ME NEXT DAY HAS NOT YET DONE SO NOR SENT WORD. SEEMS NO INTENTION MEETING. MEANWHILE WITHOUT WAITING YOUR DECISION HE HAS CALLED FOR APPLICATIONS FROM CANDIDATES.

RAJAGOPALACHARI

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27 December 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

Asaf Ali has returned from Madras but he has not been able to solve the problem. Perhaps it has become more difficult. Some of our Congress people there created an atmosphere of hostility and gave him letters of protest containing veiled threats.

On his return to Bombay he explained to me the position, but soon after his arrival I got a telegram from Kamaraj Nadar and a letter from Muthuranga Mudaliar, copies of which are enclosed herewith together with copies of my replies to both of them, for your information. It will give you a clear idea of the situation.

I got a telegram from Sarat Babu which is also interesting and I am enclosing a copy thereof. 'One Mr. Ramnath Goenka, who is the proprietor of the Madras Express and who is a bitter enemy of Rājaji, had sent this telegram to Sarat. It seems that they are all afraid of Rājaji's coming back to the Congress. Asaf Ali will also report to you the whole matter. It is difficult to decide what further action is now to be taken in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Calcutta

207

TELEGRAM

29 December 1945

Maulana Azad
Congress President
Calcutta

GLAD INFORM YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING ABOUT AMICABLE SETTLEMENT TAMILNAD DISPUTE. SEE PRESS STATEMENT.

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

208

TELEGRAM

Madras
29 December 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Marine Drive
Bombay

MOST GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR YOUR KIND ADVICE. ACTING ACCORDINGLY. MEANWHILE HAVE TELEGRAPHED ASAFALI AS FOLLOWS

QUOTE YOURS THANKS. RAJAJI PROMISED IN YOUR PRESENCE TO COMMUNICATE TO ME THE TIME SUITABLE TO HIM FOR MY MEETING HIM THE NEXT DAY THROUGH DOCTOR SUBBARAYAN. WHILE WAITING FOR APPOINTMENT READ A PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED TO THE API ONLY A FEW HOURS AFTER YOUR DEPARTURE BY DOCTOR RAJAN AND OTHERS. THE STATEMENT BEGINS: THE PUBLIC ALREADY KNOW THAT WE WENT ON A DEPUTATION TO THE CONGRESS PRESIDENT AND THE WORKING COMMITTEE TO REPRESENT CERTAIN MATTERS REGARDING THE TAMILNAD PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE AND ABOUT THE FORMATION OF A PARLIAMENTARY BOARD. MR ASAFALI WHO CAME HERE ON BEHALF OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE TO MAKE ENQUIRIES ON THE SPOT HAS GIVEN HIS DECISION ON CERTAIN POINTS AND HAS RESERVED SOME FOR FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITH HIS COLLEAGUES. WE MAY EXPECT TO BE INFORMED OF THEIR CONCLUSIONS IN A FEW DAYS UNQUOTE.

I REGRETFULLY CONCLUDED AS IS OBVIOUS FROM THE STATEMENT THAT RAJAJI DID NOT WANT TO MEET ME BUT WAS EXPECTING AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE HIGH COMMAND REGARDING RECONSTITUTION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BOARD. THE PUBLICATION OF THAT STATEMENT CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH IF I MET RAJAJI THE PUBLIC WOULD HAVE FORMED THE IMPRESSION THAT I WAS DOING SO UNDER DURESS. SURELY THAT WAS NOT THE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THERE COULD BE A FRUITFUL TALK. DOCTOR SUBBARAYAN WHO WAS TO HAVE ARRANGED THE TIME FOR THE MEETING TELEPHONED TO ME ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH MORNING BUT WHEN I WENT TO HIS HOUSE THAT NOON HE WAS AWAY. I HEARD NOTHING FROM HIM ON THE TWENTY-SIXTH. ON THE TWENTYSEVENTH I WENT TO DOCTOR SUBBARAYAN'S HOUSE AT HIS REQUEST AND TOLD HIM THAT I WAS AGREEABLE TO TAKE RAJAJI'S MEN IN THE PARLIAMENTARY SUBCOMMITTEE. ACCORDING TO ME NOT ADVISABLE TO TAKE RAJAJI HIMSELF IN THE SUBCOMMITTEE. I TOLD SUBBARAYAN THAT IF WHAT I NOW SAY WOULD BE SATISFACTORY TO RAJAJI I SHALL CERTAINLY GO TO HIM AND COME TO AN ARRANGEMENT ON THIS BASIS. AT ALL EVENTS I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO ALLOW TWO OR THREE DAYS SO THAT THE ATMOSPHERE CREATED BY RAJAN'S STATEMENT MIGHT CLEAR UP. IT WAS WHEN I HAD MADE UP MY MIND TO SEE RAJAJI MYSELF THAT THE PRESS RECEIVED YOUR TELEGRAM FROM DELHI. PUBLICATION OF THAT TELEGRAM AGAIN CREATED THE IMPRESSION THAT I AM ACTING UNDER DURESS AND I FELT COMPELLED TO GIVE UP THE IDEA OF MEETING RAJAJI. BUT FORTUNATELY THE ATMOSPHERE CREATED BY YOUR

TELEGRAM HAS BEEN NEUTRALISED BY A LETTER THAT I JUST RECEIVED FROM RAJAJI IN WHICH HE HAS ASKED ME TO GO AND SEE HIM AT TWO P M TODAY. I AM DOING SO.

KAMARAJ NADAR

209

TELEGRAM

Madras
29 December 1945

Sardar Patel
Bombay

I HAVE IN CONSULTATION WITH RAJAJI SETTLED AS FOLLOWS. ELECTION BOARD FOR PROVINCE WILL CONSIST OF MYSELF MUTHURANGA RAMASAMIREDDY AVANASHILANGAM MRS LAKSHMIPATHI SUBBIAH MUNISWAMI PILLAI AND ANNAMALAIPILLAI. I SHALL CONSULT RAJAJI IN WORK OF SELECTION AT ALL STAGES. I REQUEST THIS ARRANGEMENT MAY BE ACCEPTED.

KAMARAJ NADAR

210

TELEGRAM

Madras
29 December 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

FOR YOUR INFORMATION ONLY. EARLIER TELEGRAM WAS DRAFTED BY RAJAJI AND COPIES SENT TO MAHATMAJI MAULANA AND ASAF-ALI. I ACCEPTED ALL NAMES SUGGESTED BY RAJAJI WHICH MEANS OUT OF EIGHT HIS GROUP GETS THREE. ALTHOUGH OTHER GROUP INADEQUATELY REPRESENTED STILL IN VIEW OF [the] MESSAGE THROUGH SRINIVASAN I TAKE IT I HAVE CARRIED OUT YOUR ADVICE, DEPEND UPON YOU FOR HELP IN FUTURE WORK. REGARDS.

KAMARAJ NADAR

30 December 1945

My dear Kamaraj,

I got three telegrams from you yesterday, the first one being about your reference to my advice and your telegram to Sjt. Asaf Ali, the second containing information about the settlement you made with Rajaji on the formation of the provincial election board; the third one was for my information only. I am extremely glad that at last you have all agreed on a joint formula. We are passing through a very critical period. You know that we have to fight internally and externally; internally with the Muslim League and the local bureaucracy and externally with the mighty British Empire, which is sitting upon our chest. We cannot afford to quarrel simultaneously on all fronts. You also know that a deputation is coming to visit this country from England. We would make a sorry exhibition of our strength and solidarity if we were to allow our dirty linen to be washed in the public at the time of their visit. Rightly or wrongly, Rajaji happens to be an international figure. Outsiders coming to visit this country would without fail meet him when they would come to Madras. It would be unwise to antagonise him altogether and throw him away. We must use him and his talents for the good of the country, as far as possible, without compromising our principles. You also know that Gandhiji is coming to Madras in the beginning of February. He, who has raised us and the country to such a high level, would be extremely distressed if he were to find that we are not capable of dealing with our own problems with goodwill, tolerance and affection amongst ourselves, in spite of our differences. Under the circumstances, I congratulate you all, particularly you, for the settlement that you have made and I sincerely trust that you all will try and succeed in maintaining peace and harmony in the province, so that we can march together in comradeship for the freedom of our land, for which we have been making and calling upon our people to make such tremendous sacrifices.

Sjt. Nagaraj must have conveyed to you my message about Mr. Pillai, the Christian candidate, whose application we rejected on the ground of leprosy. He has written to me a bitter

letter making a vigorous attack on you and also on me, threatening publication of correspondence and charging you with communal bias, which influenced you in recommending the rejection of the application. He maintains that he has been free from any signs of leprosy since a long time and that the information given to me by you was false. He belongs to a minority community and therefore suffers evidently from communal complex. However, we must be patient with him and try to satisfy him. You must therefore gather all the information that you can get by way of evidence to prove that he was suffering from leprosy at the time when you recommended the rejection of his candidature.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Kamaraj Nadar
Madras

PS.

I am enclosing herewith copy of letter dated 3 December as well as my reply thereto of 24 December for your information.

212

30 December 1945

My dear Dr. Subbarayan,

I have received your letter of the 26th inst. I am so glad that we have been able to reach a settlement which will make joint working possible. I trust that this settlement, in spite of its imperfections, will be welcomed by all and you all will contribute your best to the restoration of peace and harmony, which alone can create favourable conditions for good work. I have tried my best to give all possible help. Let us hope that once the joint work begins, the past will be forgotten and mutual tolerance and goodwill will begin to take the place of suspicion, distrust and ill-feeling amongst comrades who worked together for many years in the past, until the unfortunate world war intervened here.

Hope you are both doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. P. Subbarayan
White's Garden
Royapettah
Madras

213

TELEGRAM

Madras
3 January 1946

Sardar Patel
Bombay

WORKING COMMITTEE FORMED PARLIAMENTARY BOARD WITH EIGHT
NAMES PREVIOUSLY DECIDED. SHALL WRITE SIXTH.

KAMARAJ

214

3 January 1946

Dear Mr. Kamaraj,

I have received your wire of today regarding the adoption of the Parliamentary Board as proposed by you by your Working Committee. I am glad that the controversy has ended and there is no more trouble about this matter. Let us hope that your action will be helpful on the whole in improving the situation.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. K. Kamaraj Nadar
Madras

215

3 January 1946

My dear Rajaji,

Since I wrote to you this morning, I received a letter from Sjt. Ramnath Goenka, a copy of which I am enclosing.

Prakasam met me today and he is meeting me again tomorrow, as we had hardly much time to talk today. He is naturally not pleased with the settlement but when I told him about Goenka's interference, he was taken aback and so he did not

say anything further. Evidently he knew nothing about this before. He had no idea of what took place here and probably came here to know how the settlement was brought about.

I have received a telegram from Kamaraj as under:

WORKING COMMITTEE FORMED PARLIAMENTARY BOARD WITH EIGHT NAMES
PREVIOUSLY DECIDED. SHALL WRITE SIXTH.

and I think it will be all right now.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

216

6 January 1946

My Dear Rajaji,

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter which I have written today to Sjt. Kamaraj Nadar. It was unfortunate that you called him and made a settlement, which appear to be at variance with what I had proposed. You must have received my letter in which I have stated the terms of my advice which was accepted by him when it was communicated to him by telephone by Sjt. Nagaraj, but as you called him, evidently not knowing that he had already got my advice, he readily accepted the terms you offered which were perhaps more suitable to him than those contained in my advice, but as he had accepted my terms, I am insisting on its observance by him. Yesterday I learnt that they are trying to wriggle out of the principal term, viz., to treat you as a member in all respects except your being formally taken as a member. Now what they propose to do is to send Sjt. Kamaraj simply to consult you after their discussions are over in their meeting and decisions are taken. Taking advantage of the understanding arrived at between you and him, they probably want to ignore my advice but I am insisting on its observance in toto.

In spite of all this, I am not sure that things will be easy for you. However, I am awaiting to hear from you about the reactions of all these there. For the present, the open controversy and wranglings appear to have ceased. That probably is the

only advantage. The concrete result can be seen when the board begins to function.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

ENCLOSURE

6 January 1946

Dear Mr. Kamaraj,

Sjt. Srinivasan met me yesterday after his return from Madras. He was present at the time when Sjt. Nagaraj sought my advice. It was given on the express understanding that it will be accepted there by you and others concerned. On this assurance, I gave the advice which was communicated to you by them through telephone. The terms of my advice were clear and unambiguous. I now understand from Sjt. Srinivasan that an attempt is being made to put a different interpretation to one of the most important terms, viz., that Rajaji was to be consulted at every stage in the matter of selection of candidates and he was to be treated in all respects as a member of the election board, although formally he was not to be taken as a member. You have accepted my advice and I have communicated the terms of my advice which you have accepted to Maulana Azad and Sjt. Asaf Ali. If any effort is now made to do anything which is inconsistent with these terms by putting a different interpretation, you will put yourself unnecessarily in trouble. Sjt. Srinivasan reports to me that some of your colleagues advise you to consider it enough to consult Rajaji but not to allow him to be present in the meeting of the Election Board. This would be a direct violation of the important term. I had not invited anybody to seek my advice but if after the acceptance of the terms anything is done which would result in the breach of the understanding, it will have serious consequences. Whether the report given to me is correct or not, I do not know but I expect that you will not invite trouble to yourself by putting yourself morally in the wrong. Sjt. Srinivasan is also quite clear in his mind that there was no scope for any misunderstanding about the interpretation of that term. He bears me out fully and he must have written to you also about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Kamaraj Nadar
Madras

10 January 1946

My dear Rajaji,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a letter from Mr. Kamaraj which I have received here today. I am also enclosing a copy of my reply just for your information, as he himself finds difficulties to carry his crowd with you. It would be wise to appreciate his own viewpoint and not allow his followers to harass him.

I am going to Ahmedabad on the 12th and from there to Delhi on the 16th.

I hope you are keeping fit.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari

ENCLOSURE I

Madras
8 January 1946

Dear Sardarji,

I have received your letter of 30 December as also the one of 3 January. Shri Nagarajan also informed me of the talks he had had with you.

I returned from tour yesterday and hence the delay in reply.

I entirely agree with the analysis made by you in the letter of the 30th. My own opinion has always been the same as yours with regard to Sri Rajagopalachari. We must use him and his talents for the good of the country, as far as possible, without compromising our principles.

But my difficulty has always been to make him see the atmosphere he has created for himself. As a matter of fact he creates his own difficulties continuously. Months ago when I met him for the first time after my release I told him that the best thing for him was to keep a little quiet for some time. I felt things would smoothen by lapse of time. He certainly would not do so. Even a few days ago he spoke against the 'Jai Hind' slogan. That has raised a flutter. That kind of a thing might be good from the point of

view of front-page notice. At the same time it also embitters Congressmen all over. However let us hope Tamil Nad affairs would go on smoothly.

I will gather information about Sri M. Pillai.

I appreciate your frank letter and would be always glad to receive your advice.

Yours sincerely,
K. Kamaraj

ENCLOSURE II

10 January 1946

Dear Mr. Kamaraj,

I have received your letter of the 8th instant. Evidently you had not received my letter of the 6th instant on the date on which you wrote this letter. I am therefore expecting a reply to that letter tomorrow.

I am prepared to help you if any difficulties are created by Rajaji as mentioned in your letter, but you must bring such facts to my notice when you find that his attitude is not helpful. This is the first time I have received your suggestion.

If you will not create difficulties at that end, I will see that you two will be able to pull on together, and working together you will be able to understand and influence each other better. Mutual confidence will also be created by common working. If you find anything to complain of, you should not hesitate to write to me or to see him. Let there be no distrust or distance between you two. When two groups or individuals travel in contrary directions for a fairly long period, their outlook on things is likely to be different even when they meet for the first time, because they carry with them their own viewpoint and their own prejudices which would not be thrown off all at once.

I am going to Ahmedabad on the 12th and from there to Delhi on the 16th.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri K. Kamaraj
Madras

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TELEGRAM

Madras
13 January 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Care Congress
Bombay

JUST RETURNING FROM TOUR SAW YOUR LETTER. MET RAJAJI SINCE.
WRITING TO YOU.

KAMARAJ

219

4 Kondi Chetty St.
G. T. Madras
23 January 1946

Dear Sardarji,

Since wiring to you with reference to your letter about the terms of the settlement, I have been in consultation with Rajaji. I have not heard yet from Sjt. K. Srinivasan of Bombay. When Rajaji and I fixed up the terms, neither of us understood the clause about consultation as you interpret in your letter. I have however been acting in full consultation with him and I am quite confident that he himself will have no occasion to complain to you in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
K. Kamaraj

220

New Delhi
27 January 1946

Dear Mr. Kamaraj,

I have not been able to deal with your letter of the 23rd instant as well as the previous one. I am surprised that you profess

ignorance about the terms of settlement that were taken from me by Syt. Nagarajan who on your behalf met me in Bombay [along] with Srinivasan. The terms were communicated to you by a telephonic message and after the approval given by you they again met me and informed me of your acceptance. If Nagarajan now pretends ignorance about these terms which were given in detail he will have to answer for it. You may have your quarrels with Rajaji in which I will not interfere. But I will not be fooled in this manner. If you want any explanation in this matter, you may see me in Bombay when I am there.

As I am overworked at present, I have not been able to deal with your letters. Nagarajan has written to me a short letter which has also surprised me.

I will have to say nothing if you have been acting in full consultation with Rajaji and if he will have no occasion to complain as you assure me in your letter. But if he has anything to complain regarding the settlement made with me, I will see that it is enforced in full. It would, therefore, still be wise for you to act up to it without creating any trouble.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri K. Kamaraj
Madras

221

Madras
24 January 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Kamaraj has sent me a copy of his letter to you dated 23 January. He consulted me in making the recommendations but that is all.

I recommend the following modifications:

(1) RANIPET

The election board has recommended P. V. Ponnuswamy. I would recommend Sri P. M. Velayudapani who stood as an independent candidate for the same constituency in the previous election and came second. He has now applied for the Congress ticket and would be a strong candidate if he is put up by the Congress. He is a councillor in the Corporation of Madras and

lost the mayoralty by a narrow vote against Sivaraj. He stood for the mayoralty supported by the Congress vote. He now applies for the Congress ticket for the Ranipet constituency and I think we should give it to him. Ranipet is near enough to Madras and Sri Velayudapani is a good organiser of Harijan organisations and associations.

(2) **ARIYALUR**

This has been reserved for further communication by Sri Kamaraj. I would recommend A. K. V. Vembadi Mooppanar who is a Panchayat Board president in a neighbouring union, which means he commands the confidence of other communities besides his own in that area. A young man from a different district has no chance even though he may have some English education. I do not recommend such a choice even though it is contemplated by some of the members of the board.

(3) **KOVILPATTI**

There seems to be a mistake in the name but probably it is a clerical error. The name should be verified. He is the son of Kali Kudumban of Sankarankoil taluk. If that is the name recommended I agree. In other respects I support the recommendations made by the board.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

222

28 January 1946

My dear Rajaji,

I have received your letter of the 24th here today on my return. From Delhi yesterday I gave my sanction to the provincial recommendations for the Scheduled Castes nominations, subject to the alteration that you had suggested about Ranipet and I sent you copy of my telegram to Sjt. Kamaraj about it. Your letter suggests some other changes but it is too late now to make alterations.

We have not met for a long time but I should like to know the effect of Bapu's visit to your province.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

223

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
27 January 1946

Kamaraj
Madras

ALL PROVINCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS SCHEDULED CASTE CANDIDATES CONTAINED IN COMMITTEE'S LETTER TWENTYTHIRD APPROVED EXCEPT RANIPET WHERE VELAYUDAPANI'S NOMINATION IS SANCTIONED INSTEAD P. V. PONNUSWAMY. KAKKAN'S NOMINATION FROM ARIYALUR RECOMMENDED IN YOUR TELEGRAM OF TWENTYSIXTH ALSO APPROVED.

VALLABHBHAI

224

TELEGRAM

Madras
29 January 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

YOUR TELEGRAM REFERENCE HARIJAN CANDIDATES. ARRANGING FILING NOMINATIONS AS APPROVED. REFERENCE RANIPET REGRET GOOD CONGRESSMAN PONNUSWAMY OUR UNANIMOUS RECOMMENDATION REJECTED IN FAVOUR VELAYUDAPANI CONGRESS MEMBER RECENTLY JOINED WITH UNSOUND POLITICAL ANTECEDENTS. LETTER FOLLOWS.

KAMARAJ

Tiruchengodu
Salem District
South India
6 February 1946

My dear Sardarji,

I hope you had my telegram with regard to Sind. I have been following the developments in this province with anxiety. In spite of all that you did at Karachi to get together [G. M.] Syed, Maula Bux and our Congress Party together and form it into a well-knit coalition, the question of ministry-making still seems to hang in the balance. Maulana Azad's attempt to have a Congress-League ministry seems to have met with shipwreck on Mr. Jinnah's idea that no non-League Muslim should be in the ministry. In spite of all that happened, I am hoping and praying that Mr. Syed will eventually be called upon by the Governor to form the ministry. From the figures I have seen in the newspapers I am sure this could give a stable ministry in Sind as I feel certain that some of the League members will join the coalition. I do hope your great efforts will bear fruit.

I hope our affairs will be properly settled when the local Parliamentary Board finally meets and you would not be troubled with our problem.

Bapu's visit to Madura and to the South was a real royal progress. I have not seen such crowds as attended his prayer meetings. In Madura, whose population is about two and a half lakhs, there were actually five lakhs of people on the race course where the prayer meeting was held. I am afraid the huge crowd in their anxiety to get darshan¹ of Bapu were not silent and it was 9 o'clock before Bapu went back to Sivaganga House where he stayed. The next morning at the [Meenakshi] temple also, in spite of all restrictions a small crowd surged round Bapu when he offered his prayers. I am glad everything went off well though Bapu was very tired because of the crowds. In Palni where I did not accompany him in spite of huge crowds Bapu managed to offer his prayers undisturbed on the top of the hill.

¹ Audience with person held in reverence

I hope you had my last letter. I may be in Bombay on the 15th of this month when I will see you. Please remember me to Maniben and Dahyabhai.

With pranam,

Yours sincerely,
P. Subbarayan

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

226

9 February 1946

My dear Dr. Subbarayan,

I have your letter of the 6th inst. I had also received the previous one.

In Karachi, as expected, the Governor [Sir Francis Mudie] is using his hand. He is reputed to be pro-League and anti-Congress. He was responsible, according to reliable reports, for the Simla breakdown. However, in spite of what he may do, the coalition that has been made by me is not going to be disturbed and the League Ministry will not last long. If the Governor had kept neutral, we would have been able to form a good and stable ministry.

It would indeed be delightful if the affairs in Tamil Nad are settled satisfactorily when the local Parliamentary Board meets there. The Tamil Nad problem has been a constant source of trouble and anxiety to me. I am doing my best to be helpful but there are elements which seem to be irreconcilable and although there is apparent calm over the surface, I sense there is a good deal of disturbance underground. I am longing for the day when this would disappear.

I have read thrilling reports about Bapu's tour in the South and about his prayer meetings. I do not know how far it has inspired our political workers in Tamil Nad to have a look within.

I had been to the Communist headquarters in Bombay on my return from Delhi and [Mohan] Kumaramangalam was there. His sister evidently was not there. They had a trouble some time on account of a planned attack on their headquarters, on the day of the procession and firing, by some anti-Communist group. They are trying to trace them. Probably some Trotskyites are behind this unfortunate incident. I am glad that they have had

no physical injury to any of them. Their press has suffered but they have escaped scotfree.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. P. Subbarayan
Tiruchengodu
Salem Dist.
S. India

227

6 February 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received a copy of your letter to Mahatma Gandhi dated 25th ult. [See enclosure.] You are not doing any service to the organisation to which you belong by writing such letters to Mahatmaji. You insult his intelligence by doing so. You are a secretary of the University Graduates Association and as such you must understand your responsibility. Your intolerance of difference of opinion is unpardonable but your advice to Gandhiji is nothing but impudence. If you cannot learn anything from his life, you must not try to teach him, as you have much to learn and if you begin life like this, you will never learn.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V. Bapraju
Secretary
University Graduates Association
Vizagapatam

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT

Vizagapatam
25 January 1946

Dear Mahatmaji,

We have just read in the Hindu of the 24th instant your speech at the prayer meeting at the Hindi Prachar Sabha. We were surprised at your reference to Sri Rajagopalachari, on such an occasion as that, particularly in

view of the present context of politics in Madras province where Sri Rajagopalachari is trying to use everybody, including yourself, on every occasion to advance his claims to leadership which he forfeited by his reactionary conduct while a premier and his anti-Congress actions since 1942 till recently. Even today his position is that the Muslim League demand of Pakistan should be conceded because the League won all the seats in the Central Assembly and secondly the British are willing to part with powers but that we are not agreed between ourselves. He enunciated these propositions in two public meetings after Janab Asaf Ali's visit. These propositions are in direct conflict with the spirit and substance of the recent resolution of the AICC and the Working Committee reaffirming the "Quit India" resolution.

V. Bapraju

228

6 February 1946

Dear Mr. Kamaraj,

I have received your letter of the 29th ult. today on account of my being absent from headquarters. You should have accepted my decision re: Ranipet without question. Confusion has been created by your persistence in trying to give an impression that there is an appeal pending in this matter. Sjt. Obeidullah has come here to press this matter in the hope that the question can be reopened. All this confusion has been created by your creating an impression that such decisions can be revoked.

Sjt. Velayudapani's nomination having been sanctioned by the Central Board, his opponent should not have been allowed to file his nomination. Such a procedure is likely to create confusion and difficulties, besides raising unnecessary hopes amongst interested people.

I am surprised that you still seem to disregard my instructions. You say that you had consulted Rajaji both before and after the meeting, when this question was considered. I have asked you to carry out your undertaking with me that Rajaji is to be treated as a member in all respects except his being a formal member of the Board. Consultation before or after has no meaning. He has to hear the arguments and the discussions in the committee and must have an opportunity to influence the members of the committee by his own presence as well as by his persuasive ability. You cannot treat him as an untouchable and not allow him to sit near you. At any rate, this is not the

spirit in which the settlement was to be executed. If you will not carry out the terms of the agreement, I will have to take strong measures in order to see that it is fully enforced. All these difficulties have been created in this case because of your not having invited Rajaji for the meeting.

I am awaiting your proposals for the provincial nominations and you should send them quickly. Give me your reply by wire as to when I should expect your nominations.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. K. Kamaraj Nadar
Madras

PS.

You must have received my message through the API in response to your enquiry about Sjt. Velayudapani, which is quoted below:

PLEASE INFORM KAMARAJ NADAR AND BHAKTAVATSALAM THAT PONNU-SWAMY SHOULD BE ASKED TO WITHDRAW HIS NOMINATION IMMEDIATELY. THE CENTRAL BOARD'S DECISION SANCTIONING VELAYUDAPANI STANDS.

and action must have been taken accordingly.

229

6 February 1946

My dear Rajaji,

I returned last night from Karachi where I was busy and hence I could not write to you. I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter dated 29th ult. from Sjt Kamaraj and my reply of today's date.

Bapu has left Madras. I do not know what impression he has created there, but it seems whatever spiritual atmosphere he may have created, the political atmosphere appears to be as disturbed and dirty as ever. I should like to know your impressions about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Madras
12 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I got your letter of 6 February and enclosures as well as that of 9 February. I am very grateful.

Kamaraj came to me on 10th inst. and asked me to attend the Election Board meeting on Monday the 11th. At the meeting he came and said he was upset by Gandhiji's statement and adjourned the meeting to today (12th). Today he did not come but sent a statement and an authorisation for Mrs. Lakshmi-pathy to preside and carry on. You will have seen his Press statement and judged the source of inspiration. His colleagues are carrying on as a party all right though he has kept out. We went through the selections for the Council of State (a) Madras Upper Chamber (b) today altogether seven seats. The selections were discussed and recommendations will be sent up tomorrow to you. The nomination for the Council of State by-election has to be filed on 21st inst. and the nominations for the Madras Upper Chamber will have to be filed before 22nd inst. So these were taken up first. The assembly selections will come up after these are over.

They want to keep out Dr. Rajan who has applied for a seat in the Madras Upper Chamber for Trichanapally district. The matter will be further discussed tomorrow. I am afraid they will persist in rejecting him.

It is very bad what Kamaraj has done. He is badly advised by desperate people.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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TELEGRAM

8 February 1946

President
Congress
Madras

CENTRAL BOARD CANNOT MEET TILL PROPOSAL RECEIVES. INEXCUS-
ABLE DELAY ON YOUR PART HOLDS UP WORK. EXPEDITE COMMI-
TTEE MEETING. SEND PROPOSALS IMMEDIATELY.

VALLABHBHAI

232

9 February 1946

My Dear Rajaji,

I have your letter of the 7th inst. and I am glad that Bapu's presence, in spite of his silence, has created a healthy atmosphere. I have tried my best to improve the situation but I have an apprehension that below the calm surface there is still a good deal of trouble, as there are some very irreconcilable elements who are continuously trying to disturb from below.

I did not know that [J.B.] Kripalani was in the South. He has been dissatisfied with many things since Simla and is not in touch with me since a long time. He also feels that I am not helpful in his difficulties, which are of a different nature. He is not pulling on well with the President [Jawaharlal Nehru] nor is he at home with the UP Congress bosses. In the Working Committee, he has a feeling that he has no confidence of his old colleagues. Most of his grievances are imaginary. His attitude towards you is well known but I hope he will not be indiscreet there.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Rajagopalachari
Madras

TELEGRAM

Madras
12 February 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

ON ACCOUNT GANDHIJI'S REFERENCE TAMILNAD CONGRESS IN HIS ARTICLE [Gandhi's article entitled "Curious" is reproduced in the enclosure] ON RAJAJI I HAVE RESIGNED MEMBERSHIP PARLIAMENTARY BOARD. BOARD CONTINUES CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS RAJAJI ATTENDING. WILL TRANSMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOURTEENTH. REPLIES YOUR LETTERS REGARDING MASILAMANI PILLAI AND RAIPET FOLLOW.

KAMARAJ

ENCLOSURE

CURIOUS

By M. K. Gandhi

On my return journey from Palni some one gave me at one of the halts a letter reviling Shri Rajaji and Shri Gopalaswami and informing me that they would not allow any one against them to come near me. Now I know to the contrary. No one who wanted to say anything worthwhile could be prevented from seeing me or writing to me. The delivery of the very letter disproves the allegation. Shri Kamaraj Nadar was with me on the same special. He was with me in the temple on the Palni Hill. But there is no doubt that both Rajaji and Gopalaswami were closest to me during the journey. They had arranged it. Rajaji is one of my oldest friends and was known to be the best exponent in word and deed of all I stand for. That in 1942 he differed from me I know. All honour for the boldness with which he publicly avowed the difference. He is a great social reformer, never afraid to act according to his belief. His political wisdom and integrity are beyond question. I was, therefore, pained to find a clique against him. It is a clique that evidently counts in the official Congress in Madras. But the masses are devoted to Rajaji. I am neither vain nor foolish enough to feel that I could have had the huge public demonstrations all along the route of

the pilgrimage if he had no influence with the masses in Tamil Nad. Congressmen in the South will act as they think best. But I would be less than loyal to the organisation if I did not warn them against losing the valuable services which no one can shoulder as Rajaji can at the present moment.

En route to Wardha, 5-2-1946

The foregoing was written before Bezwada was reached at 5-30 in the morning. At Bezwada a note in Hindustani from Shri A. Subrahmanyam was delivered, the gist of which is given below:

"There is a belief spread in Andhradesh that you have come to Madras with a view to make Rajaji Premier. Several Congressmen have been carrying on such propaganda. Taking up the theme, some Telugu newspapers have been writing even against Hindustani. Please give your opinion on this."

I felt bound, therefore, to give my reply. I said that my journey was purely for the purpose of celebrating the silver jubilee of the Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha—now Hindustani Prachar Sabha—and incidentally for Madura and Palni temples. The visit was conceived soon after my premature discharge [from prison] and before the Congress resumption of parliamentary work was even conceived. My visit has nothing to do with Rajaji being the Premier. My life had no secrecy about it. If I wanted to give an opinion, I was in the habit of giving it openly. But I had rejected the advances of friends to guide them for I was not interested in elections and offices. But since I was challenged I had no hesitation in saying that Rajaji was by far the best man for the purpose in the Southern Presidency and if I had the disposal in my hands I would call Rajaji to office, if I did not give it to myself. But the disposal was with the Provincial Congress Committee and finally with the Working Committee. My opinion was only that of an individual, to be taken for what it was worth.

After Bezwada

En route to Wardha, 5-2-1946

Harijan, Sunday, February 10, 1946



WITH MAHATMA GANDHI



WITH CONGRESS PRESIDENT MAULANA AZAD

13 February 1946

Dear Mr. Kamaraj,

I have your wire of yesterday stating that you have resigned membership of the Parliamentary Board on account of Gandhiji's article referring to the Tamil Nad Congress. *It has surprised* me nor do I get any clear idea as to why you have resigned from the Parliamentary Board. You are the head of the Provincial Congress Committee and your protest by way of resignation from the Parliamentary Board against Gandhiji's statement is more than I can understand. However, as you have not waited even for consulting me or taking my advice, I can say nothing more than that this is not the proper way of discharging one's responsibility. I expected you here with your proposals this week but got your telegraphic resignation instead for something which Gandhiji has written. I do not know whether Gandhiji's article refers to your conduct as a member of the Parliamentary Board. Perhaps you know more of Gandhiji's mind and so you have taken this step. This will certainly lead to more public controversy and will not help the province just on the eve of elections.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Kamaraj Nadar
Madras
C. C. to Rajaji

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TELEGRAM

Madras
17 February 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

YOUR LETTER DATED THIRTEENTH. NEVER PROPOSED SHIRKING RESPONSIBILITY. STATEMENT CLEARLY STATED MY ACCEPTANCE CARRYING OUT NECESSARY WORK. SHALL MEET YOU AFTER SELECTIONS ARE OVER.

KAMARAJ

209

Madras
14 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbbhai,

The work of selections for recommendation to the Central Board is going on from Monday. The provincial board is sitting continuously from day to day. The Delhi Council of State vacancy has been considered and Mrs. Subbarayan has been selected. The nomination has to be filed on the 21st. All Madras second chamber constituencies have been selected for. I agreed to these selections except in the case of Trichinopoly for which I recommend Dr. T.S.S. Rajan. The board were against him 4 against 3 in support. When I challenged why they objected to such a person and whether it was only because he was my friend, they gave a reason which is false and unfit to be put on paper. They suggested that they had heard of private immorality. I know this is as false and baseless as it is silly and I told them so and informed them I would protest against the selection and recommend Dr. Rajan. We are proceeding with Madras Assembly constituencies. Three districts have been finished so far. For Tinnevely and Tenkasi Rural I have accepted T.S. Chokkalingam Pillai. But I should bring to your notice that he has been writing violently in his Tamil paper Dinasari attacking the Central Parliamentary Board for overriding Kamaraj Nadar. He is doing this in very immoderate language and it may be deemed an offence against discipline because one who continuously agitates against the decisions made on behalf of the Central Board is hardly a good candidate.

I considered, however, that no one should be prejudiced by what has been said or done in the heat of the present controversy. I felt also I would be guilty of partisanship if I used my influence and objected to any one on the the ground merely of his being opposed to me if he is otherwise satisfactory and is a sitting member.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

60 Bazulullah Road
Thyagarayanagar
Madras
15 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

We sat today and completed all the constituencies. Very probably Mr. Bhaktavatsalam will take the complete list to you personally as the list is too long for telegraphing. He may perhaps try to go by air.

I have already intimated to you my request that the board's majority decision in favour of K. Vasudevan for the Trichy constituency in the Upper Chamber may be changed to Dr. Rajan. In the Legislative Assembly, the board by majority have decided against Mr. V. Nadimuthu Pillai being selected for Tanjore Rural and have adopted the name of one Tyagarajasholigar. I strongly object to this and request you to restore the sitting member, Mr. Nadimuthu. He is a man of considerable position in the whole district and has been the District Board president which office he holds even now. He lost considerable property in Cochin-China during this war. Still he is one of the most influential men in Tanjore district. He has successfully resisted the Justice Party in Tanjore district. He was with us in prison in 1940-41. That a man of his position and habits should have served one full year in prison along with us shows his attachment to the Congress. He was a member of the Provincial Congress Working Committee and Treasurer. He is very keen and I press his case strongly. The man now put is quite an unimportant person. I may state that this opposition to Nadimuthu Pillai is a result only of recent disputes. He is supposed to be my friend.

I wrote to you yesterday that over four seats in North Arcot district there was a difference of opinion and the committee was divided by 4 against 3. The matter was reopened at my instance today so that we might arrive at an agreed settlement. Mrs. Lakshmipathi, who presided, insisted that the matter should not be reopened and she would rule it out. But all the members of the board excepting her were unanimous and came to an agreed settlement. These seats have also been therefore settled.

I have therefore to see you only about two cases, Dr. Rajan and Mr. Nadimuthu Pillai. I believe you can decide these cases on what I have stated and your own knowledge of affairs here. If you desire my presence I shall go there by air. For the city of Madras, General seats (four), we have suggested four names, one of which is Mr. Prakasam. This recommendation of the board is unanimous. It may be remembered that we have given an Indian Christian Madras seat to Dr. Ramachandra Rao who is an Andhra. Mr. Varadachari is practically an Andhra. We have given the Madras Council seat to Dr. Rama Rao who is of Karnatak. The other seat in the Council for Madras city is already held by an Andhra, Mr. K. Vankataswamy Naidu. In these circumstances we have recommended Mr. K. Bhashyam for the seat held formerly by Mr. Gadde Rangiah Naidu in the city. I hope this arrangement will be ratified by you. It is absolutely necessary that Mr. Sivagnana Gramani's nomination for North Madras should be ratified.

There has been no joint board duly formed. There is no procedure for counting of votes in the joint consultations. Mr. Kamaraj's resignation has intervened and there was little time. Hence all questions about overlapping constituencies had better be decided by you. I understand that Sami Venkatachalam Chetty has a reasonable chance in the Indian Chamber of Commerce constituency if the Congress put him up. No other Congress candidate is likely to have much of a chance.

I have given way in a large number of cases for the sake of peace and co-operation reserving the question of these two essentially important cases. I have given them notice that I was going to ask you to uphold my recommendation in these cases. Dr. Rajan and Mr. Nadimuthu Pillai were supported by three as against four members of the board. The majority decision is perverse and not based on the merits. On the merits Dr. Rajan and Mr. Nadimuthu Pillai should be clearly preferred to the respective candidates pitched against them.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

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TELEGRAM

Madras
14 February 1946

- (1) Bhaktavatsalam
Madras
(2) Rajagopalachari
Madras

RADHABAI SUBBARAYAN'S NOMINATION COUNCIL STATE BYELECTION APPROVED. ALSO NOMINATION UPPER CHAMBER MADRAS DR RAMARAO; COIMBATORE RAMAKRISHNA NAIDU; TANJORE MARIAITHUMA DESIKAR; RAMNAD JAYARAM REDDY; MADURA RAMACHANDRA REDDI APPROVED. INFORM ALL CONCERNED TRICHY CONSTITUENCY UNDER CONSIDERATION.

• VALLABHBHAI

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TELEGRAM

Madras
14 February 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

COUNCIL OF STATE BYELECTION NOMINATION 21ST. FOR INDIAN CHRISTIAN SEAT ELECTION UPPER CHAMBER PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS ROCHE VICTORIA. RAJAJI AGREES NOMINATION 22ND. PLEASE WIRE APPROVAL

BHAKTAVATSALAM

TELEGRAM

Bombay
15 February 1946

- (1) Bhaktavatsalam
Madras
- (2) Rajagopalachari
Madras

ROCHE VICTORIA'S NOMINATION CHRISTIAN SEAT UPPER CHAMBER
APPROVED

VALLABHBHAI

241

15 February 1946

Dear Mr. Kamaraj,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 13th inst. I shall await your report regarding the complaint from Sjt. Manikkam about the Harijan election in Ranipet.

Your report that there are other applicants for the Indian Christian seats in the Legislative Assembly is noted and I shall await reports of the Parliamentary Board.

As Sjt. Masilamani Pillai is insisting that your report regarding his being affected by leprosy is maliciously false and as he insists on an enquiry, it is better to have an independent enquiry before any further action is taken in the matter. I shall therefore await receipt of the statement which you propose to send in this connection. I appreciate the difficulty of gathering evidence on such a delicate matter but as the gentleman concerned persists that the charge is false, it becomes our duty to deal with the matter publicly, for which the responsibility is his and not ours. Evidently he is angry with you and therefore he has not seen you intentionally. It is possible that if I see him, I may be of the same opinion as you and therefore I have declined to believe his statement that your report is false. You need not be under a wrong impression that I have any doubt in my mind about the accuracy of your statement. In a matter of this character,

however, if the person concerned insists on an enquiry, it would be impossible to avoid it.

About Sjt. Ponnuswami's withdrawal, there seems to be no alternative now but to ask him to withdraw at the time of the general election, as the panel election is over. All this muddle has taken place because the proposals were received very late for sanction. I had immediately communicated my decision by telegram.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. K. Kamaraj Nadar
Madras

242

Women's Indian Association
• Sylvan Lodge
Luz, Mylapore
Madras
12 February 1946

Dear Sardar,

The above Association at a meeting held yesterday the 11th inst. passed the following resolution:

"This meeting of women urges on the Congress Parliamentary Board to nominate women as candidates to contest the general seats in the legislatures."

We are forwarding it to you for your favourable action. Our grounds for complaint are twofold. The All India Women's Conference stands for equality between men and women (in rights as well as duties) so there is no need for separate seats for women. Secondly, if there must be separate seats, they are not enough in number.

I hope you are well and will pay a visit to Tamil Nad one of these days. Please remember me to Maniben.

Yours sincerely,
Sita Devi

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

16 February 1946

Dear Sister,

I have received your letter of the 12th inst. Unfortunately your letter was too late, as it has been received when almost all the proposals from the various provinces have been disposed of by the Central Board. The Central Board would have been glad to give effect to it as far as possible if it had been received earlier.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Smt. Sita Devi, Bar-at-Law
Women's Indian Association
Madras

Lahore
15 February 1946

Dear and respected Sardarji,

I am returning to Lahore from a short visit to Madras where I had the privilege of spending half an hour with Rajaji. I was glad to find that there was a strong Congress sentiment amongst Christians and I am confident that some at least of the Christian candidates on the Congress ticket will be elected. I wish all the Christian seats could go to the Congress.

From the Madras city seat I found that Mr. D.S. Ramachandra Rao, the veteran Nationalist (Congress) Christian, was the most desired candidate. Rajaji told me that he will be selected, unless he (Rajaji) is overruled. I am also taking the liberty of writing to you to request you kindly to give him your support. There may be a tough fight with the non-Congress ticket. Normally we would desire that the claims of any candidate put forward by the local Indian Christian Association should be considered by the Congress. I am sorry to say, however, that the Madras ICA, to our great disappointment, is anti-Congress. Under the circumstances Mr. Ramachandra Rao, who

has been President of the All-India Conference of Indian Christians, is the most suitable person to represent Indian Christians in the Legislature. Our future must be with the Congress.

Hoping that this matter will receive your earnest attention,

I am,

Yours respectfully,

B. L. Rallia Ram

Hon. General Secretary

All India Council of Indian Christians

245

21 February 1946

Dear Mr. Rallia Ram,

I have received your letter of the 15th inst. You will be glad to learn that Dr. Ramachandra Rao has been selected as a Congress candidate for the Madras Legislative Assembly. There is no doubt that national consciousness is rapidly growing in the Indian Christian community and it will not be long before they all come into the Congress fold. The future of the Indian Christian community lies with the Congress. In the meanwhile, if there is anything that I can do for them you can always write to me without any hesitation.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt B.L. Rallia Ram
Lahore

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TELEGRAM

Madras
17 February 1946

Sardar Patel
Bombay

DOCTORS STRONGLY ADVISE AGAINST UNDERTAKING JOURNEY. BAD TYPE COUGH. PRAY CONSIDER AND TELL YOUR BOARD MY BEHALF I URGE MOST EARNESTLY SELECTION RAJAN AND NADIMUTHU PILLAI. OPPOSITION ONLY INTENDED AS PUBLIC SCORE AGAINST ME.

I HAVE SHOWN MAXIMUM TOLERATION ALLOWED WELL OVER FIFTY PERCENT ALL THEIR NOMINATIONS THESE TWO CASES ROCK-BOTTOM. REGARDING MADURA IF SUBSTITUTED BY L KRISHNASWAMI YOU MAY DROP VAIDYANATHIER BUT OTHER NAMES MOST OBJECTIONABLE. IF MY SUGGESTIONS ACCEPTED HOPE RECONSTRUCT UNITY PROVINCE AND GOOD ATMOSPHERE.

RAJAGOPALACHARI

247

TELEGRAM

Madras
19 February 1946

Sardar Patel
Bombay

UNDERSTAND SUBBARJMAN HAS ASKED YOU DROP HIS NAME. IF THIS TRUE I SUGGEST MRS AMRITARAMA SUBRAMANIAM LADY WITH UNIVERSITY QUALIFICATION WIFE OF LEADING DOCTOR FOR MADURA CITY. FOR MADURA RURAL IF KRISHNASAMI NOT ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON I SUGGEST RAMASWAMI AMBALAM OF KAVANUR MELUR TALUKA LOCAL KALIAR COMMUNITY LEADER SUBSTANTIAL MAN.

RAJAGOPALACHARI

248

22 February 1946

My dear Rajaji,

All your letters and telegrams were received duly. Also I had a telephone conversation with you. You thought that I was the sole authority in this matter but it was not so. We were three altogether and I was one of them. None of the remaining four attended. I tried my level best to give effect to your suggestions. In some I have not succeeded but in most I got through, in spite of opposition. The lady member of your board was fanatically opposed to most of your proposals. I have talked to her after the selections were over and I hope she will change her attitude to some extent. What grieves me more is the shocking news just received when I am dictating this letter that you have published a letter addressed to Gandhiji in which

you ask his permission to withdraw from the scene altogether. This is what I was afraid of all the while. You do not realise how unfair and unjust you are to others. After all this trouble, you want now to let us down! How can anybody support you if you were to act like this? You do not even consult us, but that has always been your way of life. I cannot understand you. I have not seen that letter yet, but I can guess.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

249

Madras
21 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Kindly forgive me for the step I have taken.

Here is a copy of a letter I have sent Bapu.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

ENCLOSURE

Madras
21 February 1946

My dear Bapu,

What you said about me publicly has, like the churning of the ocean, brought up all the poison and you have to swallow it like Rudra! I know you can. But it has made my old longing for peace too strong to resist. I haven't the strength to stand it any longer. I bore much all these days. I struggled hard to work without minding the calumniators but I give it up now. I have often asked myself the question, is it worthwhile? I feel it is not. I must yield to the longing of my heart not to be misunderstood. Why should I be thought to be seeking 'power' when it is not the case at all? I must prove it, although the proof is one that leaves no good behind but the mere proof.

Now that the urgent job of selections for the legislature is all over, let me leave the scene.

For my place (the University seat) there is Sambamurti available. He has not been given any seat nor did he apply. The position he has occupied in Andhra's public life for over a quarter of a century, the unrivalled manner in which he fulfilled his duties as Speaker and his drive and energy are well known and it would be wrong to leave him out. He can easily take my place in the nomination for the University.

I beg of you to approve of my action and pass it on at once to Sardar so that he may do the needful. Nominations must be officially filed before 1 March.

Love,
C. R.

PS.

I slept over this last night and am posting it this morning.

C. R.

250

24 February 1946

My dear Rajaji,

Your letter of the 21st inst. enclosing a copy of your letter to Bapu has been received. I have already written to you about my reaction to your proposal.

You have also left everybody in suspense and it is difficult to decide what should be done, as there is very little time. Your proposal about Sambamurthi is surprising. If you withdraw, you have no voice in suggesting a substitute. The proposal must come from the province and your suggesting a name to us or to Bapu is hardly fair. Bapu can do nothing in this matter. We cannot make any direct selections and even if such a proposal comes from the province, the Central Board may find it difficult to accept it. He has himself made a public statement that he does not desire to stand. I cannot therefore understand why you have made that suggestion.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

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TELEGRAM

Madras
23 February 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

LEFT URGENTLY. UNABLE MEET YOU CONSEQUENT BOMBAY TRANSPORT ETC SITUATION. ARRIVED JUST NOW. ENROUTE READ NEWSPAPER REPORT RAJAJI WITHDRAWAL. LATER ARRIVING MADRAS FURTHER NEWSPAPER REPORT VAIDYANATHIER WIRING YOU. SHALL CARRY ON WORK AND [ensure] CONGRESS COMPLETE SUCCESS. INSTRUCT HOW FILL SEATS LIKE VAIDYANATHIER IF ARISING. SHORT TIME PRECLUDES FORMAL PROCEDURE. SHALL WIRE ANY DEVELOPMENTS.

KAMARAJ

252

TELEGRAM

25 February 1946

Kamaraj
Madras

YOUR WIRE. IN CASE RAJAJI AND VAIDYANATHIER HAVE WITHDRAWN WIRE YOUR PROPOSALS SUBSTITUTES.

VALLABHBHAI

253

TELEGRAM

Bombay
27 February 1946

C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

ACCEPT YOUR PROPOSAL WITHDRAWING FROM UNIVERSITY CONSTITUENCY WITH REGRET.

VALLABHBHAI

White's Garden
Royapettah
Madras
23 February 1946

My dear Sardarji,

When I met you in Bombay I had not the idea that my application will meet with the fate it has, but even if I had a hint I can assure you I had no intention of saying anything about it, as I had left my fate entirely in your hands. . . . As you have known me all these years, I felt of all you would fight [my] battle whatever may be the views of other members. I feel that you did fight it, but failed. The candidate who has been put up comes from outside, but I am sure whatever your decision, the constituency will be loyal to the Congress. I sent you the telegram yesterday consulting Rajaji as I did not want him to interfere after his letter to Bapu, and I felt I must fight my own battle. . . .

With pranams,

Yours affectionately,
P. Subbarayan

26 February 1946

My dear Dr. Subbarayan,

I had your letter of the 23rd inst., as also your telegram was received. Your proposal was strongly opposed by my colleagues on the Board as well as by the representative of the provincial board. I regret to say that I find myself helpless. Rajaji's telegram had nothing to do with the rejection of your proposal. Unfortunately, I now find that Rajaji also withdraws himself. I am sorry for what has happened, but let us hope that this unfortunate chapter will soon end and Tamil Nad after some time will again recover itself and work in unity and in a peaceful atmosphere.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. P. Subbarayan
Madras

27 February 1946

Dear Mr. Kamaraj,

I am sending you herewith copy of a resolution which I have received from K. Pandian, secretary, Usilampatti Town Congress Committee. The resolution speaks for itself. I would advise you in your own interest and in the interest of the province to stop this kind of propaganda which will not do any good to anybody. Gandhiji is too big to be affected by such things, but it will reflect very badly on our organisation. However, I will leave it to you to do what you like. This is my advice.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Kamaraj Nadar
Madras

ENCLOSURE

THE USILAMPATTI TOWN CONGRESS COMMITTEE, USILAMPATTI

To
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

The following resolution was carried out at the meeting of the executive committee of the above Congress committee presided over by Mr. R. Ramachandra Rao.

This meeting strongly condemns the article by Gandhiji which appeared on 10-2-46 in Harijan regarding Congress affairs in Tamil Nad, and demands the immediate withdrawal of the article in whole.

For Town Congress Committee
K. Pandian
Secretary

18-2-1946

4 March 1946

Dear Mr. Bhaktavatsalam,

I have received your letter of the 1st inst. along with the Press cutting (See enclosure.). As Sjt. Roche Victoria stands on the Congress ticket, he should not have issued a separate manifesto. The Congress manifesto gives enough scope to him to work for the interests of his community, but the Congress is equally interested in the welfare of his community as himself and to claim votes on communal lines is against the declared policy of the Congress. He should have relied on the Congress manifesto for securing votes from his community. You may take exception to this and inform him that this is not the Congress way of fighting elections.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. M. Bhaktavatsalam
Secretary,
Tamil Nad Congress Committee
Madras

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT

Although I am nominated by the Congress, my first and foremost duty is to safeguard and promote the interests of the Indian Christian community.

....

I hereby assure the voters that if at any time the interests of our community clash with the policy of the Congress, I shall always stand by our community.

I therefore request your votes that I may be returned to the Legislative Council.

J.L.P. Roche-Victoria

The Hindu, Madras, 1 March 1946

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF MRS. RADHABAI SUBBARAYAN
DATED 7 MARCH 1946 TO SARDAR PATEL.

Tiruchungodu

The silence of the provincial Congress leaders about my candidature has given rise to many rumours and there is now an impression that certain prominent Congress personalities are anxious that I should suffer a defeat to prove that Rajaji's friends have no support in the Press.

I am writing to you frankly as I really do not know what to do.

259

12 March 1946

My dear Mrs. Subbarayan,

I have received your letter of the 7th inst. Immediately after receiving your letter, a telegram was sent to the president of the Tamil Nad Congress Committee asking him to take necessary steps in the matter. I have again sent another telegram and written to him also.

I appreciate your difficulties in the adverse circumstances in which you are asked to fight your election but I will do my best from here to help you. Once your selection is made, it would be criminal for those in charge of the organisation to be passive or to do anything which would contribute to your failure. I do not know the date of your election, but I have asked Sjt Kamaraj to let me have the date and also to take all possible steps to secure success for the Congress in this by-election.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Mrs. Radhabai Subbarayan
White's Garden
Royapettah
Madras

12 March 1946

Dear Mr. Kamaraj,

Mrs. Radhabai Subbarayan's nomination for by-election to the Council of State was sanctioned on the recommendation of your provincial board. Nothing appears to have been done by the provincial board since then, except asking Mrs. Subbarayan to file her nomination. Why has her nomination not been announced as yet? In this connection I have to invite your attention to the telegram that was sent to you [to] which also I have received no reply. I should like to know when is the date fixed for this by-election. Everything possible should be done to see that the Congress does not suffer a defeat here. Please write to me what is being done in this case by the provincial organisation to see that the Congress does not suffer a defeat.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Kamaraj Nadar
Madras

261

TELEGRAM

Madras
15 April 1946

Sardar Patel
Birla House
New Delhi

MYSELF POLLED 2427 OPPONENT 133. GLAD CONGRESS WON BY-ELECTION COUNCIL OF STATE.

RADHABAI

262

TELEGRAM

17 April 1946

Mrs. Subbarayan
Care Congress
Madras

YOUR TELEGRAM. CONGRATULATIONS SPLENDID SUCCESS.

VALLABHBHAI

263

New Delhi
14 April 1946

Dear Friend,

Your letter dated 26 March addressed to Mahatma Gandhi (See enclosure) has been forwarded to me for disposal. You are making serious allegations against Shri Venkatachalam Pillai who was selected in preference to you as a candidate for the Madras Assembly by the Central Board but you have marked your complaint as confidential. As a Congressman, it is improper for you to make complaints of such a nature confidentially. No enquiry can be made of confidential complaints. You must be prepared to substantiate the charges that you propose to make against another Congressman. Unless you are prepared to take responsibility for your complaint, no action can be taken. You must remember that you are trying to take away the character of a man and if the allegations that you are making are found to be false, you would be liable to be expelled from the Congress. If you will make open charges against Shri Pillai, we will make proper enquiries.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Ganpathi Reddiar
Perambur
Trichy district

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF SHRI GANPATHI REDDIAR, DATED 26 MARCH 1946 TO MAHATMA GANDHI

I beg to introduce myself to you that I was one of the applicants to the Tamil Nad Congress Committee as a candidate for the Madras Legislative Assembly election for Ariyalur division, Trichy district. Myself together with another applicant met the TNCC representatives when they came down to Trichinopoly to select a suitable candidate for representing the Congress. It is regrettable that they decided to select Mr. B. Venkatachalam Pillai wholly with a one-sided view and did not at all lend ears to our representations. It is high time to inform you that this Venkatachalam Pillai is the same traitor who was arrested during the 1942 disturbances but evaded the prison bars with the help of the then ICS Collector, Mr. S. K. Chettur.

264

Malathi
4 Giri Road
T'Nagar
Madras
21 December 1945

My dear Chief,

Your statement on railway retrenchment had a magical effect. While most of the Agents agreed with the Railway Board that they would defer the matter and if possible get over it by many alternative methods suggested by the federation, the S.I. Ry. Agent insisted on going on with the retrenchment of about two thousand and that would have led to complications immediately. Anyway, after your timely intervention he also agreed to fall in line and I hope there will be no question of retrenchment till 31 March and it may be that the question may be dropped altogether. The retrenchment of eight thousand referred to [is] merely to be taken by the Railway Administration in respect of manufacturing war material and as a purely temporary affair.

We are trying our best to see that we secure all the labour seats in Madras province. Hope we will have success in our attempt.

With heartiest regards and best wishes for your restoration to normal health.

Yours sincerely,
V. V. Giri

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

• 265

27 December 1945

My dear Giri,

I have received your letter of the 21st inst. I am glad that my statement has been helpful and the idea of retrenchment has been abandoned for the time being. I trust you will succeed in securing all the labour seats in the Provincial Assembly. In Bombay, I am told, our position is not secure. In the railway labour seats, out of two we might get one, according to the report.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Mr. V.V. Giri, Bar-at-Law
MLA
Madras

266

Madras
21 January 1946

My dear Chief,

I hope you know that Mr. V. R. Kalappa is now in England in connection with the work of an international committee on behalf of the All-India Trade Union Congress.

I am anxious he should be set up as a Congress candidate either for a labour seat or for a general seat. His presence in the Provincial C.P. Assembly will be an asset to us.

I am just writing this so that you may have him in view. I hope in the C.P. the Parliamentary Board has set him up as a candidate.

With kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely,
V. V. Giri

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

267 .

30 January 1946

My dear Giri,

I have received your letter of the 21st inst. I have accommodated Sjt. Kalappa in the constituency from which he was returned last time. There were difficulties as there were other claimants who were connected with that constituency and as Sjt. Kalappa had not kept in touch with it. However, we have given our decision in his favour and it is to be hoped that it will give no ground for complaint.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V. V. Giri
Madras

268

12 February 1946

My dear Giri,

I have received your letter of the 8th inst. I have not yet received the proposals from Andhra. The provincial board meets on the 15th, after which date they will send their proposals immediately. As soon as they are received, the Central Board will proceed to dispose them of. Your objection about the change of your constituency will be considered at that time.

Your personal letter of the same date has also been received. That matter will also be looked into at that time.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V. V. Giri
21, Curzon Road
New Delhi

Madras
21 February 1946

My dear Chief,

I see from today's papers that I have to contest 'Sarvasidhi'. As I have stated to you, I do not mind so long as it is your decision. Before leaving for my constituency, I am trying to organize forces to fight Communists who are standing in the labour constituencies. Time permitting I shall also pay flying visits if I possibly could.

I am glad you selected Mr. V. Raghaviah for Nellore. I would never have intervened in that matter but for the fact that I felt his selection was just and useful.

With kindest regards,

•Yours very sincerely,
V. V. Giri

PS.

The committee on 'Forced Labour' has been indefinitely postponed, presumably on account of protests from States. This is for your information.

27 February 1946

My dear Giri,

I have your letter of the 21st inst. about your change of constituency. Both Dr. Pattabhi and Mr. Prakasam assured me that there will be no contest and that you will be returned unopposed from this constituency. Therefore, I did not press the matter further.

About Mr. V. Raghaviah, who was himself present, the committee accepted my advice and I am glad he has been selected.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri V. V. Giri
Madras

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TELEGRAM

Narasapatnam
1 March 1946

Sardar Patel
Bombay

UNCONTESTED. VISITING LABOUR CONSTITUENCIES.

GIRI

272

2 March 1946

My dear Giri,

I have received your telegram and I congratulate you for your uncontested election. It was expected, as you must have seen from my last letter to you. I trust that in the labour constituencies also, the Congress will win. It seems in your province the Communists have established a strong foothold. In this election, it must be demolished and the Congress position vindicated.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V. V. Giri
Madras

273

Camp Vizagapattam
2 March 1946

My dear Chief,

I am just now in the Vizagapattam labour constituency where a Communist is vehemently opposing our candidate. I hope to be here for two days before I visit other constituencies in the province. I hope you received my yesterday's wire from my constituency.

232

I have wired you today about Mr. D. V. Ramaswami. I must have also mentioned a fact that he is my uncle (my dear mother's first cousin). But I need not assure you that in making a representation on his behalf I am only actuated by the country's interest and not of a personal kind.

The whole board unanimously selected him and Mr. V. J. Gupta does not carry the high reputation which Mr. Ramaswami carries with respect to character, integrity and sacrifice. Our leaders should have suggested to you that Mr. V. J. Gupta should have been nominated as an alternative to Ramaswami as has been done in other cases. I am glad Dr. Pattabhi has kindly intervened and justly too.

Anyway, I am sure whatever your decision is will be accepted by every one.

Your justly changing some of the decisions of the local parliamentary board has rehabilitated Congress prestige very highly. Your acts are appreciated.

With kind regards,

•
Yours very sincerely,
V. V. Giri

274

4 March 1946

My dear Giri,

I have just received your letter of the 2nd inst. regarding Sjt. D. V. Ramaswami. I have made the necessary alteration and sent telegrams to Sjt. Prakasam and Sjt. V. J. Gupta about the change. Sjt. Gupta has been asked to withdraw his nomination.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V. V. Giri
Madras

7 March 1946

My dear Giri,

I have your letter of the 2nd inst.

I have heard from Sjt. Gupta today that he has withdrawn his nomination. The Congress nominee, Sjt. Ramaswami, has been elected unopposed and I am glad that my decision has met with general approval there.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V. V. Giri
Madras

21 March 1946

My dear Giri,

I have received your letters of the 17th, 18th and 19th inst. There has been some bungling with regard to the selection of labour candidates but we have to rely upon provincial advice as we have here little knowledge of local conditions. Anyway you have to do your best under the circumstances. All over India the Communists have lost except the railway constituency of the G.I.P. and B.B.&C.I., where our people mismanaged things so much that we lost both the seats without contest. Sjt. Khedgikar's nomination was rejected on technical grounds. He is now filing an election petition.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V. V. Giri
Madras

25 March 1946

My dear Giri,

I have got your telegram regarding the labour seat in Madras and I congratulate you all for the result. I trust this is the forerunner regarding elections in Madras Presidency.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V. V. Giri
Madras

8 Raja Street
Madras
24 December 1945

Dear Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad,

From the newspapers I find that the Central Parliamentary Board is going to meet at Delhi on 15-1-'46 and will consider selection of candidates for the Madras Legislature also.

In this connection, I wish to inform you that even the final electoral rolls are not yet ready in this province. The revising authorities who will have to sit to consider claims and objections will begin work only on 3-1-'46. In the result, the final list will be ready about 20-1-'46. That date also is not yet announced. The Government notified that they can only fix the programme of elections after the final rolls are available. As applicants will have to enter their electoral numbers on the application forms and make sure of their entry, difficulties will arise in adjudging them. But by the time the revising authorities will sit, we will have the decisions ready. Much wind was taken out of the sails when the Madras Government published that they would not disqualify detenus for want of "residence."

In these circumstances we called for applications. We will begin considering them as from 5-1-'46. Our committee has decided to visit each district before fixing up names. So we will

be unable to send up the names before 15-1-'46. However, we will try to send one batch by then. As for the rest you will have to wait till the last week of January or the end of January.

I request you to let me know the latest date by which you would expect our trial list.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,

T. Prakasam

[President, Andhra Pradesh Congress
Committee]

279

27 December 1945

My dear Prakasam,

I have received your letter of the 24th inst. There are many provinces in which applications have been invited before the end of the first week of January and their proposals are expected by the 10th. The committee meets on about 15 January to discuss all these proposals which will be received before that date. It would be better if we can get your proposals for your province also by that time. Otherwise we will have to meet again somewhere to consider your proposals. If it is possible you may try to expedite.

I saw a statement sent by you and Mr. Muthuranga Mudaliar regarding Mr. Asaf Ali's work there. It would have been better if you had not issued such a statement. Nobody wants to impose decisions from above nor is there any desire to interfere with the legitimate rights of the province. But the centre is bound to give due weight to representations made by a very large number of members of the provincial Congress committee and if the committee is almost equally divided or if there is a substantial difference of opinion, it becomes the duty of the Working Committee to see that justice is being done to differing groups. The majority must not be impatient or intolerant with the minority.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sri T. Prakasam
Madras

29 January 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I have received your letter containing the list of candidates recommended by your board today. As the date for nomination was also today, your proposals came very late to be of any use for us to consider. However, I have already wired my sanction to these proposals which were telegraphed to me by you.

I am expecting your proposals for the general and other special constituencies as soon as possible, because it has been already late and if you do not send them in time, the committee will not give you sanction without scrutinising them. You must give the committee time to meet and consider the proposals along with the complaints and appeals received. I therefore suggest that you must send them now without delay.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. T. Prakasam
Bezwada

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
27 January 1946

T. Prakasam
Andhra Congress
Madras

YOUR WIRE TWENTYFOURTH RECEIVED TODAY. YOUR SCHEDULED CASTE RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED.

VALLABHBHAI

282

TELEGRAM

Nellore

27 January 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

MALABAR MOPLAH FRIENDS MET YESTERDAY AT MADRAS AND
REQUESTED TO WIRE AND WRITE TO YOU FOR HELP. SEE LETTER
REPLY ELLORE TWENTYNINTH COCONADA THIRTIETH

PRAKASAM

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TELEGRAM

68 Marine Drive
8 February 1946

Prakasam
Congress
Bezwada

YOUR WIRE TWENTYSEVENTH AND MADRAS LETTER EIGHTEENTH
BEING UNSIGNED COULD NOT UNDERSTAND. MALABAR MOPLAH
FRIENDS MUST ACT THROUGH KERALA PRESIDENT, TAMILNAD THROUGH
KAMARAJ.

VALLABHBHAI

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EXTRACTS

13-C Ferozeshah Road,
New Delhi
8 February 1946

My dear Sardarji,

As I had feared, the expected has happened in Andhra.

The Andhra Provincial Parliamentary Board has rejected the
applications of everyone of our kisan¹ Congressites who have had

¹ Peasant

as distinguished a record of service as Congressmen for seats in the Madras Assembly.

Although there are more than 40 seats for our Andhra districts, our kisan Congressites have thought of applying for only 12 seats. But since the leaders of those Congressmen who had been in office in Congress Committee since 1940 had been openly declaring that they would ignore the kisan Congressites and since they alone got representation of the Parliamentary Board, three of our friends did not even venture to apply.

I appeal against this injustice.

Yours affectionately,
N. G. Ranga¹

285

13 February 1946

My dear Ranga,

I have received your letter of the 8 inst. regarding the exclusion of kisan Congressites from the provincial recommendations to the Central Board for seats in the Madras Legislative Assembly. The points raised by you will be considered by the Central Board, which meets on the 17th and thereafter for consideration of these applications and if there is anything that could be done in the matter, the Central Board will certainly do so.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Prof. N. G. Ranga
13-C Ferozeshah Road
New Delhi

¹ Started career as professor of economics in Madras; President, All-India Kisan Sabha; President, Andhra PCC; member, Congress Parliamentary party at Centre; founder-President, Swatantra Party

EXTRACT

Masulipatam
1 March 1946

To
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
President, Central Parliamentary Board
Bombay

Sir,

Let me offer my sincerest thanks to you and to the members of the Parliamentary Board for having selected me as a candidate on the Congress ticket for the West Godavari-cum-Kristna Mohamedan rural constituency of the Madras Legislative Assembly. I filed my nomination paper on 28-2-46 before the Collector of Kristna and the scrutiny will take place on 4-2-46. We got arranged a conference of all the Shias of Andhra Desa on 27-2-46 at Masulipatam, wherein resolutions were passed that all the Shias, now in the Muslim League should secede from the League and join the Indian National Congress.

As it is our first serious attempt in these parts to rally the Musalmans of Andhra under the banner of the Congress, I earnestly request you to bless our attempt and to extend your best help in all such directions as you think desirable.

Yours sincerely,
Mirza Ghulam Hasan Khan

4 March 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 1st inst. I wish success in your efforts to bring round the Muslims of Andhra under the banner of the Congress and I congratulate you for the bold stand you have taken. It is difficult for any outside Congress Muslim leader to come there. Sjt. Asaf Ali is engaged in the Central

Assembly, but if you suggest any other name, I will write to him.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Mirza Ghulam Hasan Khan, Esq.
Grandson of the late Nawab of Masulipatam
Masulipatam

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Bezwada
3 March 1946

Revered Sardarji,

Polling for the elections to the Madras Legislative Assembly will come off in Andhra between 18-3-46 and 22-3-46 for all the general and special seats. You might be aware that the Communists have set up nearly 28 candidates for the general and special seats in certain areas. They are putting up stiff opposition by means of funds got from somewhere. In order to meet their propaganda and opposition people in various constituencies are demanding of the candidates and the Congress committees speeches from all-India leaders of eminence. We know that it would be a great strain upon your valuable time, especially after your provincial elections, to come and be with us for a few days. But, none the less, in view of our local situation we are constrained to make this demand and request that you will be pleased to spare as many days as you can from now on till 18 March. Kindly inform us the exact date from which you can spare and the number of days you will be available in our province. As soon as we hear from you we shall wire the exact programme and arrange for your tour and reception. I hope that you will not refuse this request of ours.

Thanking you,

Your sincerely,
Kala Venkata Rao
General Secretary
Andhra PCC

Sadar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

12 March 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of 3 March. We have a meeting of the Working Committee here from today and as soon as the meeting is over, we will have to arrange for going to Delhi in connection with the coming visit of the [British Cabinet] Delegation. It is not possible for me to come to Andhra before the elections, as my engagements here are not such as can be put off.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Kala Venkata Rao
Bezwada

SARDAR PATEL'S MESSAGE TO THE VOTERS OF SOUTH INDIA

13 March 1946

In all the provinces in which the result of elections is declared, it appears that the Communist candidates have all been defeated. None of their candidates have so far succeeded anywhere. Next to the Punjab perhaps, in Andhra Communist candidates are more numerous. The election date is drawing near in South India and I earnestly appeal to all the voters in Andhra, Tamil Nad and Kerala to return the Congress nominees with an overwhelming majority. In the last elections, polling was first held in the Madras Presidency and the voters had given a lead to the country by returning the Congress candidates in very great majority. I have no doubt that in spite of all controversies which have now been finally settled, the South Indian voters will maintain their high reputation of being strongly Congress-minded and declare unhesitatingly in favour of Independence.

The women candidates who are Congress nominees will, I trust, score heavily against their opponents.

27 March 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 24th inst. I am glad that you have succeeded in defeating the Communists everywhere in your province, which undoubtedly was their stronghold and particularly as Com. [Comrade] Joshi had made Bezwada his headquarters. I must wait till the official results are out, but pending the results I congratulate you all for the good work you have done during the short period at your disposal. I do not know why Dr. Pattabhi recommended candidates who were not strong and made it difficult for you to fight the Communists. It was well known that in all these constituencies there will be a very stiff contest. Why he did not come to help you in the election campaign in these constituencies, I do not know. However, all is well that ends well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. A. Kaleswara Rao
Bezwada

21 February 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter which I have received from Bezwada dated 15th inst. Ordinarily I would have ignored such a letter but there is a specific allegation in this letter which I believe requires immediate contradiction. It is about your having collected Rs. 50,000. I do not know whether there is any truth in this matter but if you have collected such an amount, it must have been credited to the Congress account in your province. This kind of scandal should not be allowed to be spread and therefore I would suggest that you may take such steps either by public contradiction or by such other method as you may deem appropriate to prevent the spread of such scandals.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. T. Prakasam

Camp Sardar Griha
Bombay
22 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thanks for the letter that was delivered to me yesterday when I was with you in your C.P. Board meeting.

Some kind friends have been after me scandal-mongering. It is all due primarily to ignorance from out of which envy, jealousy, ill-will, cruelty spring. Such misguided men demand the heads of innocent men. Sometimes those in power fall victim to the tricks and machinations of such misguided men. I am glad you have proved an exception and advised me to issue a contradiction to a particular scandal. If one should engage oneself in contradicting 'scandals, even one's full length of 125 years' life would not be sufficient for that purpose alone.

Therefore I don't adopt your advice about contradicting. I am thinking of adopting another method. The conspiracy of a group to pull down one in their effort to pull up another, is growing day after day. As soon as I go to Madras, I shall hand over all the papers to my lawyers and seek their opinion as to the nature of action that I should take. I shall let you know after I get the legal opinion. I am not fond of law courts, yet, if one is compelled he will have to do it.

Thank you for the enclosure you were good enough to send me with your letter yesterday. That supplies the missing link, even though it might be a false letter by a false person.

Now that you are anxious about my reputation and that of the Congress, I enclose herein a memo that I have taken today from Rajya Lakshmamma which will give you an idea of the nature of the fund presented to me and the nature of the disposal of such fund by me.

Shri Rajya Lakshmamma is the lady who argued her own appeal before you on the 19th inst. in BPCC buildings in my presence. When she came to me this morning, I took the enclosed note from her with a view to send it to you and Mahatmaji.

I have taken your letter and the enclosure as a confirmation of Mahatmaji's correspondence with me recently. I request you therefore to pass on to Mahatmaji your letter of yesterday and this reply of mine for his information.

Yours sincerely,
T. Prakasam

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25 February 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I have received your letter of the 22nd inst. Since then I have seen Bapu's article in the Harijan entitled "Purses for Public Men." Evidently he has also received some complaints about this matter. You want me to pass on our correspondence to Bapu and therefore I am doing so, but I am afraid neither your reply nor the enclosure which you have sent along with it explains the matter properly.

I assumed when I wrote to you that the purses alleged to have been collected by you to the extent of Rs. 50,000 must have been sent by you to the Provincial Congress Committee and therefore I suggested that you should contradict the report that you had used this amount for personal purpose. The enclosure that you have sent me confirms rather than contradicts the allegation. If the amount of Rs. 2,000 were collected from villagers and presented to you on their behalf along with an address for your services, it would be improper to use them for personal purpose, even if they so desired. A Congress leader doing so would be charged with exploiting the poor, ignorant villagers and if such examples were set by a Congressman holding a high position, it would be a dangerous precedent. If you have therefore collected Rs. 50,000 in this manner, I would strongly advise you to credit that amount to the PCC. In this matter no legal advice is needed and I do not think that any lawyer will advise you to go to a court of law for redress. The enclosure is a piece of evidence more against you than in your favour and if you will ever go to the court in this matter, the man against whom you will file a complaint will have the upper hand against you. I would strongly suggest to you to reconsider your position and refund whatever

amount you have collected by way of public purses to the PCC so that there may be no more scandal about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. T. Prakasam
Camp Sardar Griha
Bombay

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8 Raja Street
Thyagarayanagar
26 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

With your letter dated 21st inst. you sent an enclosure. The original of that letter purports to have been signed by one V. Srinivasa Iyer. Please let me know whether the original of that letter dated 15th inst. was received by you through post or through any messenger. If through messenger, can you kindly let me have the name and address of the person? I would like to know the whereabouts of that V. Srinivasa Iyer in Bezwada.

I am inclined to think that the name V. Srinivasa Iyer is a fictitious name. That is why I am requesting you to give me the above information about that person. While I am troubling you for this information, I am also endeavouring to send you more proofs similar to that of Rajya Lakshamma, which I sent you with my last letter.

I hope to send them to you in two or three days.

Yours sincerely,
T. Prakasam

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

295

1 March 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I have received your letter of the 26th ult. The original letter was received by post and not through messenger.

Whether the name of V. Srinivasa Iyer is genuine or fictitious, you need not attach any importance to it. What matters

is the contents of the letter. If you think that the facts stated therein are false, you need not worry, but reports about these purses have appeared in the Andhra Press and as lot of rumours are spread about it, it is better for you to issue a public statement instead of collecting evidence from individual donors. If it is a fact that you have got purses to the extent of Rs. 50,000 from people and if there are reports about it in the Press, it is your duty to make a public statement that these purses have been presented to you for your private use and so you are not accountable for it to anybody. The general impression amongst the public and particularly amongst Congressmen would be that the purses are presented to you for public purposes but if you can justify its private use, you must prevent this misunderstanding that is growing. Some of the people that came here from Andhra also talked to me about it. You know Bapu has written in the Harijan about this question without referring to you and he will perhaps be receiving letters from Andhra in this connection, as it has now become a public controversy.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. T. Prakasam
Madras

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Madras
2 March 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have sent copies of proofs covering over nearly Rs. 26,000 today by air mail. Rest will follow within a very short time.

The originals of the proofs have been sent to Mahatmaji today by air mail.

Yours sincerely,
T. Prakasam

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

5 March 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I have received your letter of the 2nd inst. sending me copies of proofs covering about Rs. 26,000 of the purse fund. You need not take the trouble of sending all these things to me because I needed no proof of this kind. I had asked you to consider the question of propriety of taking public purses for private use. Evidently these collections have been made from numerous poor people and undoubtedly the money has been given to you in appreciation of your services and sacrifices, but you have to consider whether it is proper for a public leader of your status to accept such purses for personal use. Therefore, all your efforts to collect evidence is unnecessary and you need not waste your time and energy after it.

I have received your telegram about financial help required for Muslim and other candidates from your province. So far as the Muslim candidates are concerned, I understand there are only three, of whom Sjt. Safi Mohamed needs no assistance. For the non-Muslim candidates, the province must make its own arrangements. It is true that there has been cyclone trouble but it is also true that people, in spite of that, are willing to contribute money and you have only to make efforts for that purpose. However, I am doing what I can to meet with your reasonable requirements and writing to Sjt. Kala Venkata Rao about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. T. Prakasam
Madras

Camp Ongole
9 March 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

In continuation of my last letter to you I am sending further proofs and statements of friends to enable you to understand the circumstances fully. You will please read the statements of Sri T. Viswanadham, Dr. Nageswara Rao, Sri M. Bapineedu, and Sri Gollapudi Sitaramasastry of Vinayasramam and other friends.

Although you have asked me not to send further proofs or evidence I am sending you because it is necessary that the real truth about the nature of the purse has to be understood by you and Mahatmaji. I am trying to clear the ground first by placing all the proofs. It is a very serious matter for anybody to fling a charge against any one recklessly. Nobody can be safe in the world if unfounded scandals should be allowed to go unchecked. A mere contradiction from me cannot remove the doubts of prejudiced minds.

You have no idea of my struggles. If you have not known it hitherto I have every hope that you will know it before long. You might testify, at least this much, that I have not been in the habit of carrying stories against others or in favour of myself to any authorities. When you gave me your letter in Bombay, I sent you a reply. I had not the opportunity of talking to you at length. There will be a few more proofs yet to reach you. The Press contradiction which you advised will be published in due course.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
T. Prakasam

18 March 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I have your letter of the 9th inst. with its enclosures. I have repeatedly told you that this is all a useless waste of time and energy. What I wanted you to do was to consider the question of principle with an unbiased mind whether it is advisable for a Congressman to take such public purses for private use. When I asked you to issue a contradiction, I presumed that whatever purses you may have received must have been credited to the Congress account, but when it is admitted that it is not so, the question of contradiction does not arise at all. The collection of proofs that you have been making and forwarding to me is wholly unnecessary.

I have already sent another remittance of Rs. 10,000 to Sjt. Kala Venkata Rao on the 14th inst.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbbhai Patel

Sjt. T. Prakasam

MAHATMA GANDHI'S STATEMENT ON COLLECTION OF PURSES BY T. PRAKASAM

MY ADVICE

New Delhi
15 April 1946

Shri Prakasam I have known as a worker for many years. He has somehow developed a philosophy that a public worker is entitled to receive purses from the public for his expenses. In pursuance of that philosophy he has received a considerable sum in the shape of purses. Those who collected them have wired or written to me that they saw nothing wrong in so doing or in Shri Prakasam receiving them. Some have gone so far as to say that Shri Prakasam should even become a member of the Madras ministry, if not the Prime Minister.

With the greatest reluctance I must dissent from the whole view. I know that Shri Prakasam says that he has changed his mind. Sudden conversions

are not unknown. But they are cast in a different mould. A ministership cannot be the end of genuine repentance and conversion. My advice to Shri Prakasam is that he should retire even from the Legislative Assembly and brood over the bad example he has set. There is ample field open to everyone for silent service which is often much greater than service done in the limelight.

M. K. G.

CHAPTER V
SECTARIAN RIVALRY

300

Belgaum
2 October 1945

Respected Sir,

Kindly excuse me for writing directly to you in connection with the ensuing elections to the various legislatures. I would have been failing in my duty if I had not expressed my views with regard to the selection of candidates for the same. I request you to give full consideration to what I have said in the accompanying note.

Kindly excuse me for the trouble.

Yours obediently,
P.B. Ugargol
Chairman
District Central
Co-operative Bank Ltd.
Belgaum

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS

SUGGESTIONS TO THE CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY BOARD

It will all the more be welcome if the candidate so selected happens to be a veteran co-operator.

If the so-selected Congress candidate happens to be conversant with laws in addition to his being a co-operator.

Another essential criterion to be borne in mind in respect of Karnatak in the selection of candidate from that province, is the unification of Karnatak.

P. B. Ugargol

Poona
5 October 1945

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 2nd inst.

The coming elections are to be fought, not on petty small issues which would give petty advantages to the people, but on the bigger issue of independence. What is the use of the experience of a veteran co-operator who, during the struggle when people were faced with a severe trial could not come forward to bear the heat of the movement. But it is for your provincial organisation to find out proper men for the legislatures and if you will send your suggestions to the provincial Congress committee, they will be able to test them.

Regarding the unification of Karnatak, no Congressman has to learn anything new. The Congress stands for provinces based on language and the Congress has already accepted that principle in its own organisation.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri P.B. Ugargol
Chairman
District Central Co-operative Bank Ltd.
Belgaum

EXTRACTS

279 Shivajinagar
Poona
4 October 1945

Dear Sardar Patel,

I had been a member of the non-Brahmin party in Bombay province since its inception in 1917. I continued to be its member and adherent till the end of September 1937 when I joined the Congress.

I joined the Congress as, I have stated above, in September 1937 yielding to the persuasion and pressure of Messrs. Shankarrao Deo and Gadgil.

In 1940 I enrolled myself as a satyagrahi and was in jail from November 1940 to November 1941. I disagreed with the 'Quit India' resolution when it was first passed by the Working Committee on 14 July at Wardha. I informed Mr. Shankarrao Deo about the fact of disagreement and made it quite clear that I would abstain from participating in the movement. But, in spite of this disagreement, I was arrested on 9 August 1942 and detained in the Yeravda Central Prison.

I decided to write to Government informing them frankly of my disagreement about the 'Quit India' resolution. I wrote to Government accordingly and was released by the end of July 1943. Since my return I am exclusively devoting myself to my profession in order to mend my shattered financial position.

I still firmly believe that the non-Brahmin movement, in its essence, was a movement for the many-sided betterment of the masses.

In Maharashtra and Karnatak the non-Brahmins have done their bit for the country's cause. But in spite of their great sacrifices the non-Brahmins are grieved to find that they are not getting an effective share in the Congress organisation and in the other spheres of Congress activities.

Even before I joined the Congress (i.e. in 1937) some of the Congress leaders had held out very tempting offers to persuade me to contest the elections as one of the Congress candidates. I did successfully withstand that temptation. The demands of my profession and my present financial position do not permit me to even dream of going after fleeting parliamentary fortunes.

Yours,
S. S. More¹

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

¹ Leader of workers and peasants in Maharashtra who was elected to Lok Sabha and unsuccessfully contested Speakership in 1952

Poona
5 October 1945

Dear Shri More,

Thanks for your letter of yesterday delivered to me through a special messenger.

Much of what you have written is not unknown to me. But it is all past history and you must realise that India is now on the eve of reaching its goal. The non-Brahmins must knock off their fear complex and their inferiority complex. I cannot understand why 97% of non-Brahmins should have any fear of domination from the 3% Brahmins. Whatever might have happened during the period of foreign rule, such things cannot continue any longer. When foreign rule is about to disappear the Congress can and must be managed and controlled by the non-Brahmins who form the bulk of the population. It is a pity that you could not stand the test during the crisis and wrote that letter of apology from jail. Thousands of non-Brahmins have made sacrifices during this struggle and the Maharashtra Congress has gained considerable strength through their sacrifices. It is not possible for the Brahmins to exploit them. You must forget the past and try to educate the non-Brahmins along the right lines. Let them learn self-reliance and let them be strong and they will get all possible help from the top.

I see that you have started your practice again. It is not possible for all to make continued sacrifices and I sympathise with you. But you must not leave the Congress. You must try again to come in and serve as an humble worker and regain your position when the time comes. The non-Brahmins have few able men and they cannot afford to lose men like you who have ability and experience. You must forget the past and try to come up with the present.

I thank you for your suggestions.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri S.S. More
279 Shivajinagar
Poona

EXTRACT

Lahore

24 December 1945

My dear Sardar Patel,

I am writing to request you kindly not to contest the Indian Christian Poona-Ahmednagar seat for the Bombay Assembly on behalf of the Congress, since Mr. A.B. Tribhuvan, pleader, Ahmednagar, is not only a party to that resolution but is also desirous of fully co-operating with the Congress in the Council. I have no doubt that you will find him a steadfast nationalist. I, therefore, venture to hope that there will be no official Congress candidate to oppose him.

Yours sincerely,
B.L. Rallia Ram¹

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

27 December 1945

My dear Rallia Ram,

I have received your letter of the 24th instant with its enclosures. The Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee has already invited applications and I am not sure whether they have not received applications from Christian candidates for being selected on the Congress ticket. I am however making enquiries from the provincial committee about the matter.

Thank you for your kind enquiry about my health. I am much better than I was when you saw me.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Mr. B.L. Rallia Ram
Lahore

¹ Indian Christian leader who settled in West Pakistan



THE VICEROY, LORD WAVELL, WITH C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

30 December 1945

My dear Diwakar,

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter received from Mr. F.M. Pinto, Bombay, who is a nationalist Christian. If you think that his suggestion is feasible, you may do so, but if it is not, you may report to me stating the reasons for the rejection of the suggestion, so that I may be able to give him a reply. If it is possible to accommodate this minority community by giving one seat to a nationalist Christian on the Congress ticket, it would be wise to do so.

I have received your letter of the 27th instant with its enclosures.

Yours sincerely,
• Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. R.R. Diwakar
President, KPCC
Hubli

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT

15 Bank Street
Fort, Bombay
28 December 1945

Dear Sardar Sahib,

Though I feel the demand for four seats by the local Christians is too much of a thing to ask, and again a demand on communal lines is wrong in principle, under the present situation and communal atmosphere, a seat to Christians, if given, will go a long way to win them over.

Yours sincerely,
F. M. Pinto

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

30 December 1945

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 28th instant. Mr. A.J. Pinto had written to me when I was at Poona asking me to give the Christians four seats from a district in Karnatak in the coming Legislative Assembly and I thought that this gentleman was following the path of the Muslim League. If such demands are not accepted, it is because it is not in our power to do so. The absurdity of the demand is self-evident. Such people would not be satisfied by legitimate concessions. On the contrary, they will be encouraged to make further demands if any concession is given.

I have forwarded your letter to the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee for disposal.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

F. M. Pinto, Esq.
Nationalist Christian Party
Bombay

Congress Bhavan
Poona
24 December 1945

Dear Sardar Sahib,

There is a university seat in Bombay province. According to the Central Board's circular, this seat will have to be fixed by the joint meeting of five provinces (Sind, Gujarat, Bombay, Maharashtra and Karnatak). This will be a cumbrous process. Will you advise us what to do in the matter? We were informally discussing the names and the trend of opinion in our province is that Sjt. B. G. Kher will be the most suitable candidate. Will you let me know how to proceed in the matter?

Yours sincerely,
T. R. Deogirikar

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

26 December 1945

Dear Mr. Deogirakar,

I have received your letter of the 24th instant. If Bala Saheb Kher proposes to stand from the University constituency there will be no difficulty and all provinces will gladly support his proposal. But as a matter of courtesy, I would advise your committee to consult all the Congress provinces within the Bombay Presidency by circulating your proposal before sending it to the Central Board.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Mr. T. R. Deogirakar
Congress Bhavan
Poona

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24 December 1945

My dear Diwakar,

Complaints have been received from your province that your election board is composed of a large number of members who are themselves candidates. There is substance in the complaint if it is so. It would be advisable to form a board of people who are not interested in the election personally. It would not be difficult to form a board of three or five members who may not be candidates and such a composition would give satisfaction and nullify the cause of the complaint.

I have received a copy of the questionnaire issued by the Karnatak Provincial Parliamentary Board. Whether it is right to issue such a questionnaire to intending candidates or not is a question. This information can be obtained without putting questions to the candidates themselves. Some candidates may consider it offensive. However, it is for you to decide.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri R. R. Diwakar
C/o. Provincial Congress Committee
Hubli
Karnatak

25 December 1945

My dear Diwakar,

Mr. Sambrani met me here yesterday and represented his case to me [See enclosure]. I talked to you about his complaint and you agreed that there was substance in it. It would be unwise on our part to ignore his claim. He has been a loyal Congressman throughout and he was chosen on the last occasion also. The other man may be more clever, but he has never been in the Congress and is not prepared even now to accept the Congress ticket. It would be unfair to Mr. Sambrani to drop him simply because his educational qualifications are not equal to that of his rival. You may look into the matter and see that justice is done to him.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri R. R. Diwakar
Hubli
Karnatak

ENCLOSURE
EXTRACTS

Dharwar
17 December 1945

Sir,

In reply to my first formal application for the Congress ticket I was informed by the chairman of the Karnatak Provincial Congress Parliamentary Board that they would consider the question after Government nominations were made.

I submit that the decision of the provincial board is unjust in view of the fact that I was the only applicant for the Congress ticket. In view of my long and faithful record as a Congressman and also in view of my long service in the cause of Harijan uplift I submit that there was no reason for the board to postpone consideration of the question until after the Government nominations. I appeal to the All India Board against this decision of the

provincial board and pray for my nomination as a Congress candidate for the constituency.

Yours faithfully,
D. Y. Sambrani

The Chairman
All India Central Congress
Parliamentary Board
Bombay

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Hubli
29 December 1945

My dear Sardarji,

Re. : Shri Sambrani

In continuation of my letter dated 28th instant, I am giving below some available information.

The Belgaum North non-Mohammedan constituency has a total of 87,904 voters. Out of them about 17,000 are Harijan voters. Thus about one-fifth are Harijan voters, the bulk of them being Mahars.

This time in the primary election, Shri Varale (sitting Harijan—Mahar member), Shri Maney (Harijan—Mahar) and Shri Sambrani (Harijan—Mochi, from Dharwar)—these three have come off successful.

The total number of votes polled in the last election in 1937 were as follows:

Belgaum North:

x 36,232	Shri A. B. Latthe	} Congress
x 35,358	Shri N. G. Joshi	
x 31,475	Shri M. P. Patil	
26,516	Shri S. N. Angadi	
x 21,322	Shri Varale—Harijan—Mahar	
13,177	Shri Karale	
4,169	Shri Sambrani—(Harijan—Mochi)	Congress
2,091	Shri Papanna—(Harijan)	
725	Shri Rava	
216	Shri Channappa Savanur (Harijan)	
1,71,281	Total votes cast.	

Number of voters who actually voted are 42,820.

The mark 'x' denotes those who were elected.

These figures are instructive and we will have to consider all these things before coming to a final conclusion.

Re. : Rail Road Scheme

I have some good news to convey to you. The Valuation Committee visited Bagalkot on the 27th and 28th. But I am glad to inform you that not a single operator submitted his vehicles. If the operators work in this spirit I am sure the scheme will not progress.

Yours sincerely,
R. R. Diwakar

313

1 January 1946

My dear Diwakar,

I have received your letter of 29 December and I have seen the figures of votes of the last election. According to the figures we have to be careful lest we may not lose the seat, but the difference this time is that the number of voters must have increased and the Congress can easily expect to get a much larger number of votes. However, you are the best judge of the situation.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri R.R. Diwakar
Hubli

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TELEGRAM

Dharwar
5 February 1946

Vallabhbhai Patel
Chairman Congress
Parliamentary Board
Bombay

PLEASE READ MY APPEAL ALREADY EXPLAINED YOU PERSONALLY.
PLEASE SELECT ME FOR BELGAUM NORTH HARIJAN SEAT.

SAMBRANT

6 February 1946

Dear Mr. Sambrani,

I have received your telegram of the 5th instant. The decision has been taken finally by the Central Board and, therefore, there is no appeal against that decision. In order to compensate you for your loss which you may feel, Mrs. Sambrani has already been given a ticket instead and, therefore, you should now be satisfied. We have done our best to help you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. S.Y. Sambrani
Market Road
Dharwar

EXTRACT

Hubli
4 January 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

This is to introduce to you Sjt. Mane, B.A., Bar-at-Law of Nipani in the district. He is standing as an independent candidate to the coming provincial elections. Dr. Ambedkar has put up Sjt. Varale as his party's nominee. Varale was a member of the last Assembly. You may be aware that one seat is reserved for the Scheduled Castes in this district.

So far as Sjt. Mane is concerned, I am in a position to say that he is a nationalist and opposed to Dr. Ambedkar's policy. He wants to explain to you personally why he is not standing on the Congress ticket.

Kindly give him a hearing.

Yours sincerely,
Gangadhar B. Deshpande

9 January 1946

My dear Gangadharrao,

Mr. Mane saw me this morning with your letter. He had also brought another letter from Mr. Latthe. It appears from what he says and what you have written that he should be allowed to contest as an independent candidate, but after election he will sign the Congress pledge and join the party. As you are all of the same opinion and as a large majority of voters are not likely to support him if he takes the Congress ticket, he may be allowed to do so. The other man, Sambrani, will have a sense of grievance and we will have to satisfy him by providing for him somewhere else, either in the municipality or in the local board. After all he is also a loyal Congressman. But I agree on the whole with you that Mr. Mane, who is a Mahar and who commands more influence in that community, should be allowed to stand as an independent candidate.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Gangadharrao Deshpande
Hubli
Belgaum

90 Thalakhwadi
Belgaum
14 January 1946

Dear Sir,

I hereby appeal to you and the Central Parliamentary Board to consider my application for selection as a candidate for election to the Bombay Assembly. The KPP Board have not yet to my knowledge declared its recommendations, but from all I have come to know, it seems they are determined to drop me out.

As I hope you will remember, I requested for permission to resign my seat in the Assembly in 1940-41 as soon as I found

that I could not conscientiously declare that I would fight all war non-violently. You did not permit when again I found that in my humble view the 1942 movement was not likely to be advantageous, I again applied to the leader of the Congress Assembly Party, Mr. [B.G.] Kher, to permit me to resign in your absence under detention. For these reasons I had no mind to seek the Congress ticket or contest the coming election. But my constituency pressed me, and the Chikodi Taluka Congress workers resolved that I should be a candidate. Then again at a meeting of the principal Congress workers in the district, a committee consisting of Mr. Gangadharrao Deshpande and two others were appointed to select candidates from this district and it was agreed by all the persons present, including the president and secretary of the DCC, that every one should obey the committee's mandate. The committee asked me to apply. It was thus that I was obliged to apply.

There is a degree of opposition to me from those who think that, if elected, I would stand in their way to ministership. A section of Brahmin friends also oppose because they think that I am not as good a Kannadaman as they want. Their two groups, headed by some Lingayat [a caste among Hindus in Karnatak] leaders and Mr. Diwakar, are trying to have my application rejected.

I have nothing to say if you or your Board think that I am unfit to be selected on account of the opinions I hold.

But if you hold that these views do not come in the way of my candidature, I hope the Board will give their best consideration to my application. You know the communal and factious conditions in Karnatak and unaffected by them, I hope the Board will give justice to me.

I must add that even though I held the views stated above I did nothing by way of propaganda or public denunciation against the majority decisions of the AICC and so far as Government was concerned, I maintained complete non-co-operation. I was requested to join two official committees on rural development and food supply. In both cases, I declined. When I was released from detention after about two weeks, all kinds of false rumours spread out. But though they were false and I had not even asked for release, I desisted from defending myself, simply because I knew I would be finding fault with the activities of my Congress friends in defending myself. I think even today that in circumstances like these, this was the best I could do in

justice to my own views and my duty to the organisation of which I was an humble member.

I again repeat that I have no desire to be selected by your Board if it is held that the views I held disqualify me. I only wish the Board not to allow themselves to be influenced by the communal motives or factiousness in this province.

I believe an attempt is being made to create an impression that I am wanting public support. I have stated above why there is this attempt. I would only add that if you permit me to fight the election even against those who are making this attempt, I would show that I shall succeed in winning my seat. I know I am pledged not to fight the election if you do not select me. I won't unless you permit. That is why I would request the Board to permit me to do so to test the correctness of those who are bolstering up an opposition to me. I can prove to any impartial person that the numerous telegrams and letters sent to the KPP Board were got up by a few individuals here and I am willing to accept their challenge, if you permit me to do so.

Yours sincerely,
A. B. Latthe

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30 January 1946

My dear Latthe,

I had received your letter of the 14th instant but I was busy at Delhi and therefore I could not send you a reply. You know that the Central Board has referred back the proposals from Belgaum and asked for fresh applications with the extension of time. What the committee will do it is difficult to say but I have already communicated my opinion to Gangadharraoji previously.

There is no question of your not succeeding in the election, but the Congress cannot permit any one to stand independently where it is possible for the Congress to secure success on its own ticket. I appreciate your feelings in the matter but it is difficult to reconcile opposition where prejudices are created on account of peculiar circumstances.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. A.B. Latthe
90 Thalakwadi
Belgaum

19 January 1946

Dear Mr. Shah,

I am very glad to learn that you have been released after all. I have been making enquiries about you from Seth Lalchand and Ratanchand often. I hope you have been able to maintain your health and, what is more important, your spirit during these two years.

I note what you write about your application for a seat in the Bombay Assembly and I am sending your letter on to my father at Delhi. I believe it is too late and the decision would perhaps have been taken before I finish writing this. The Karnatak situation is well known to Sardar and Sjt. Shankarrao Deo and N. V. Gadgil are there to advise him also, but my fear is that it is already too late. Your disqualification will have to be removed. I do not know whether you have made any application to Government in the matter. I understand that Mr. Chetty of Construction Co. as he spoke to me two days ago has already wired to you in the matter and as advised by him I hope you have sent a telegram to Delhi.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Dahyabhai Patel

Sjt. M. H. Shah
Bijapur

8 February 1946

My dear Shah,

I had seen your letter of 17-1-46 addressed to Dahyabhai after your release from detention. Your nomination for the Provincial Assembly on the Congress ticket has been finally approved and in spite of all agitation to the contrary there will be no change in that decision. I hope you will find no difficulty in being returned with a very good majority. When you come

to this side, you must meet me, if I am in Bombay, but there is no hurry. As you are going to be in the Legislative Assembly, you will have many occasions to come to Bombay.

I trust you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. M. H. Shah
Bijapur

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TELEGRAM

Hubli
1 February 1946

Vallabhbhai Patel
Care Congress
Karachi

DIWAKAR AND MALLYA ASSAULTED AND MANHANDLED IN PARLIAMENTARY BOARD MEETING TODAY BY SOME CONGRESS COMMUNAL-MINDED FANATICS ALLEGING DIWAKAR RESPONSIBLE FOR CHANGING CONGRESS CANDIDATES BY CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD. PUBLIC FEEL DEEPLY DISTRESSED.

DR. HARDIKAR

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6 February 1946

My dear Dr. Hardikar,

I have received your telegram and I am enclosing herewith a copy of my letter to the President of the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee in the matter. The incident is disgraceful and distressing and I hope the committee will take proper action.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. N. S. Hardikar
Hubli

ENCLOSURE

8 February 1946

Dear Friend,

I had read reports about Sjt. Diwakar being assaulted and attacked in the meeting of the Provincial Parliamentary Board held at Hubli on 1 February. On my return from Karachi, I have received the official report of the proceedings of the meeting of which I am enclosing herewith a copy. If such disgraceful incidents are allowed to go unnoticed, public life would be impossible and therefore it is necessary to take serious notice of the conduct of the persons concerned. Perhaps your committee may have already insisted upon action in the matter, but I would be surprised if nothing is done about it. I would advise you to issue notices against all those people asking them to explain their conduct and if the allegations made are proved to be true, they should be expelled from the Congress organisation. Please inform me about the action taken.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

President
Karnatak PCC
Hubli

INCIDENT AT THE MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BOARD ON 1-2-1946

"Today (1-2-1946) at about 10 a.m. when the Karnatak Provincial Congress Parliamentary Board was conducting its business (in the KPCC office in Hubli), Shris Dundappa Saunshudhi, L. S. Patil, Shantinath Ingale, Basawanappa Sanikopp Itagi and Shri Yajaman Shantarudrappa [of] Bellary, altogether about 20 to 25 persons, effected their entrance into the meeting hall without obtaining the permission of the president of the meeting.

2. The Board had met to discuss some important matters. Some of these people asked the president to give them some time to make representations. The president told them that the previous day sufficient time had been given to them to do so, but yet as the Board was engaged in serious deliberations, they could see them some time in the afternoon. In reply to that they said that they wanted to represent certain more important matters and persisted that they should be given an opportunity to do so then and there.

The president said that their attitude was quite inconsistent with the decorum and discipline of the meeting, still they insisted on their demand. The president also said that under the circumstances he would have to adjourn the meeting, to which they said that they would not allow him to do so. Then the president said that if they did not go out he would be obliged to leave the place. While the president stood up and was about to leave the place some one of the persons forcibly tried to hold him down. Some other person took the office files in his hands and was about to go out. One Shantarudrappa Yajaman of Bellary gave a blow on the head of Shri Diwakar with his umbrella. On learning about this, persons who were in the hall came in and restored order by asking them to go out.

3. As these unpleasant things happened while the meeting was going on it was thought necessary to record the same in the proceedings book."

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Congress Bhavan

Poona

5 February 1946

Dear Sardar Sahib,

We recommend Mr. Amiralli for the Kolaba district Muslim seat on the Congress ticket. The district Congress workers are agreeable to the proposal. Please sanction his nomination at the earliest and oblige.

Yours sincerely,
T. R. Deogirikar

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7 February 1946

My dear Deogirikar,

I have received your letter of the 5th instant.

Your recommendation of Mr. Amiralli for the Kolaba district Muslim seat as Congress nominee has been approved. You may inform the candidate accordingly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. T. R. Deogirikar
Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee
Poona

Bombay Provincial Congress Committee

Bombay

9 February 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

The Provincial Election Board of the BPCC has unanimously made the following recommendations in regard to the three constituencies which were left out.

(1) Mr. M. Y. Nurie for the textile labour constituency of Bombay.

(2) For the Indian Christian constituency of Bombay, the Board is of opinion that the Congress should not officially nominate a candidate of its own. Dr. Jos Alban D'Souza is standing as an independent candidate in this constituency. During the past several years Dr. D'Souza has maintained very friendly relations with the Congress in Bombay. He was elected Mayor of Bombay last year purely on Congress vote. He has amply justified his election. There would be nothing wrong in recommending him for support to the nationalist elements in the Christian constituency. Our board is of the opinion that if necessary and if it helps the election of Dr. D'Souza, the Congress should publicly advise the Nationalist Christians to vote for Dr. D'Souza although he is running on the independent ticket.

(3) As regards the millowners' constituency, we are told that Sir Sorab Saklatvala is being favoured by the Committee of the Millowners' Association. It is not possible to run a Congress candidate in this constituency. The board, therefore, does not wish to make any recommendation as regards this constituency.

(4) The Board examined the position of the two seats in the railways constituency. Looking to the election of delegates, which took place only yesterday, the board is of opinion that only one Congress candidate can be returned from this constituency. The board, therefore, recommends that no other candidate should be run in this constituency.

Yours sincerely,

S. K. Patil

General Secretary

11 February 1946

Dear Friend,

Your letter of the 9th instant has been received.

(1) Your recommendation of Sjt. M.Y. Nurie for the textile labour constituency has been approved.

(2) Your proposal not to put any Congress candidate officially for the Indian Christian constituency of Bombay and to allow Dr. Jos Alban D'Souza as an independent candidate in this constituency has also been accepted.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbbhai Patel

Secretary
Bombay Provincial Congress Committee
Bombay

Congress Bhavan
Poona

10 February 1946

Dear Sardar Sahib,

We are recommending Sjt. I. N. Hakim as a candidate to contest the reserved seat for Mohamedans in Satara district on behalf of the Congress. Kindly send your sanction.

Yours sincerely,
T. R. Deogirikar

11 February 1946

My dear Deogirikar,

I have received your letter of the 10th instant. Your recommendation of Sjt. I.N. Hakim to be nominated as Congress

candidate for the Mohamedan constituency in Satara district has been approved and the candidate may be informed accordingly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. T. R. Deogirikar
Congress Bhavan
Poona

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Belgaum
10 February 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

As I said in my telegram yesterday, I am very grateful to you for selecting me and putting me in the Northern Division of this district.

My first thought on hearing of my being put in the Southern Division was that it did not matter much, though I knew N. D. was easier. During the last two days, however, I have changed my view. I know now that some of our own workers have gone the length of instigating anti-Congress Lingayats to put up an independent candidate in S. D. and make my task very difficult. This is sad, but new experience has made me wish to avoid the serious risks of contesting in the South.

I hope by now you have come to know how far malice has gone in Karnataka and you will not disbelieve me when I tell you that in the predominantly Lingayat South Belgaum, there would be much malicious opposition to me, and possibly some treachery as well.

One word more. For long, I did not wish to contest this election. But the decision of Gangadhar Rao Samiti, proposed by my opponents themselves, put me under a moral obligation and I had to apply. I need not recount what followed. I feel sincerely grateful for what you did, which saved me from a very annoying situation. That is why I am so grateful.

Yours sincerely,
A. B. Latthe

13 February 1946

My dear Latthe,

Thanks for your telegram and also your letter of the 10th instant. Karnatak is a difficult province and people there are easily moved by passion. There is very little tolerance amongst public workers. In the disposal of the election of candidates, the little province of Karnatak has given us more trouble than the biggest one in India.

Gangadhar Raoji was more anxious for your going to the legislature and he has worked hard for it against many odds. Perhaps your inclination to stand aside would have given you more peace than your going in. Let us hope that you will be more helpful to straighten affairs in Karnatak or at least keep the Karnatak Assembly Party in order. It is a crowd of irreconcilables and people of incompatible temperament. It is difficult to work with such people.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. A. B. Latthe
Belgaum

11 February 1946

Dear Friend,

In continuation of my letter of the 29th ultimo, I have to inform you that in consultation with the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, the Central Board has decided to allow you to stand as an independent candidate from the Indian Christians constituency of Bombay, and not to put any official candidate of the Congress there, in view of the fact that there is a possibility of some embarrassment being [caused] to you, in case of our insistence on your accepting the Congress ticket. You have always in the past stood by the Congress in the Corporation, particularly since your being elected as Mayor and in view of

your general pro-Congress' attitude, it has been decided to make this concession in your favour in this constituency.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Jos Alban D'Souza
Mayor of Bombay
Bombay

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TELEGRAM

Yeotmal
13 February 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai
Congress House
Bombay

•
AGRICULTURISTS OF BERAR MOST DISAPPOINTED AT REJECTION
DOCTOR PANJABRAO DESHMUKH'S NAME ELLICHPUR DARYAPUR
CONSTITUENCY. VITAL OBJECTIONS GOVINDRAO'S NOMINATION. EARN-
ESTLY PRAY RECONSIDERATION AND REINSTATEMENT DOCTOR DESH-
MUKH'S NAME. DEPUTATION PRAYS TIME WAITING ON YOU BEFORE
DECIDING. REVISIONS FILED. PLEASE REPLY.

NARAYAN BALAJI PATIL
YEOTMAL

CHAPTER VI
PUNJAB—FACTIONS GALORE

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TELEGRAM

Lahore
2 November 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Poona

LETTER SENT THROUGH GHAZNAVI. NO ANSWER. DESIRE STAND
PUNJAB ASSEMBLY LAHORE SEAT. YOUR SUPPORT ESSENTIAL. CAN
COME PERSONALLY IF INTERVIEW NECESSARY. WIRE.

MRS. ZUTSHI

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TELEGRAM

Poona
4 November 1945

Mrs. Zutshi
Care Congress
Lahore

YOUR LETTER THROUGH MAULANA GHAZNAVI RECEIVED. CAN
GIVE NO PROMISE IN ADVANCE. SELECTION LARGELY DEPENDS
UPON PROVINCIAL RECOMMENDATION.

VALLABHBHAI

EXTRACT

6-B Kapurthala House
Lake Road
Lahore
5 November 1945

Dear Sardar Patelji,

I have duly put in my application for the Congress ticket for the Punjab University constituency from which I was returned to the Senate, as a Congressman in March 1940, as well as in March 1945. I had the unique distinction of having Gandhiji's blessings both in 1940 and 1945. The University constituency is a joint constituency and out of 1,600 voters, Muslims are less than 300.

It is difficult to anticipate precisely the decision of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee regarding my application. But what I have gathered so far is that the PPCC will not recommend my name for the University constituency; the reasons that will influence their decision are as follows:

(1) After the volte-face of Mr. Abdul Qayum and the somersault of Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, the sincerity of almost every nationalist Muslim in this part of the country is being questioned and his bona fides being impugned.

(2) In case the Congress ticket is given to a Nationalist Muslim for a mixed constituency like the University, the Mahasabhaites and others may kick up a row and their propaganda may spoil the chances of some of the Congress candidates for the general constituencies.

(3) There being two distinct Congress groups in the Punjab, a neutral person like the writer of these lines will be altogether ignored, when a bargain is to be made between the two rival sections, about the distribution of seats.

Yours sincerely,
(Prof.) Abdul Majid Khan

Poona
12 November 1945

My dear Prof. Abdul Majid,

Your letter of the 5th instant regarding your proposal for Congress ticket for the Provincial Assembly has been duly received. If I had my choice I would certainly, without a moment's hesitation, sanction your proposal straightaway.

About your fitness for selection there can be no two opinions. You have been a staunch Congressman all through your career and have always stood for unadulterated nationalism. As far as my own views in the matter of this selection are concerned my weight will be entirely in your favour, but I am not in a position to say what view my Board will take at this stage. The proposals from the provinces will be first scrutinised by the provincial selection board and will be submitted here with their recommendations. The Central Board will then meet and decide finally. There may be a number of considerations which may influence the judgment of the Board, but if they feel that your selection is likely to result in the losing of a seat in that constituency they may prefer another, in which case I have no doubt you will accept the decision of the Board willingly as a loyal Congressman and support whoever is selected as the candidate. More than this I cannot say at this stage.

You perhaps remember that I was also present when you last met Bapu at Simla.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Prof. Abdul Majid Khan
Lahore

Poona

11 November 1945

My dear Gopichand,

Prof. Abdul Majid Khan has applied for the Congress ticket for the Punjab University constituency from which he has been returned to the Senate as a Congressman in March 1940 as well as in 1945. This is a joint constituency where out of 1,600 votes there are less than 300 Muslim votes. It would indeed be a great gesture to the minority community and vindication of the principle of joint electorate if the Congress would return a Muslim Congressman from this constituency where the Hindu voters are in a very large majority.

I do not know what would be the reaction of your committee in this matter, but I should like to know your own view about this case. His proposal is still under consideration by your committee, but he has sent me a copy in advance.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Lahore

PS.

You can also consult Maulana Daud Ghaznavi and let me know what his own reaction in the matter is.

17 Jail Road
Lahore

13 December 1945

My dear Sardarji,

I am so much obliged to you for the honour you have conferred upon me by nominating me to contest the Lahore City (General) constituency of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. I hope, by the grace of God, I shall continue to enjoy your confidence. As it happens, there has been no suitable opportunity for

my coming in closer contact with you. I shall consider it my privilege to be afforded greater opportunities of personal contact with you in so far as they may be considered to be in the interest of the public life of my province.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Bhim Sen Sachar

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Birla Park
Calcutta

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25 December 1945

My dear Bhim Sen,

I have received your letter of the 13th inst. We would indeed be very glad to be of any help to your province and to have greater opportunities' of personal contact with you so that you may be able to understand us better and also be able to render greater service to your province. Unfortunately, the Punjab has been divided into groups and factions of a very bitter type and hardly two men trust each other. All sacrifices of the people of the Punjab end in nothing on account of the disunity, distrust and consequent demoralisation. The two provinces that have suffered from these maladies are the Punjab and Bengal. I have noticed that you have been trying to steer clear of parties, but that is not enough. It may give you peace of mind but individual peace is of no consequence when we see all round our work being undone by our colleagues and comrades. I do not mean to attach any blame to you for your keeping aloof from parties; that is the least that is expected from good Congressmen. But unless there is someone who can assert and enforce his will without caring for the displeasure of those who are in the wrong, no progress can be made.

I am distressed to find that even good Congressmen are not united in the Punjab. It is said here that no settlement has been reached on any question affecting the elections in the Punjab. Instead of this muddle at this critical juncture if we could secure a big group in the new Assembly which cannot be ignored it would be something; otherwise all the sacrifices of the past three years, the enthusiasm of the people and the awakening of the masses

will result in nothing, and the energy and the expenses of all of you will in the end be wasted. Punjab is a key province. Can nothing be done to make Congress workers realise their sense of responsibility at this critical period?

Is there any danger about the University seat from where Dr. Gopichand has agreed to stand or shall we get it without much difficulty?

What about the commerce constituency? Will our candidate win or is there any danger?

I notice that the Akalis are on the war path and no settlement has been reached. Shall we be able to secure all the non-Muslim seats for which we have given Congress tickets? What is the position and strength according to your calculation of the Unionist Party and what is your estimate about the strength of the League? How many Independent Muslims will be returned and how many Congress Muslims will be returned in the elections? Please send me a full report on all these questions.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sri Bhim Sen Sachar
Lahore

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30 December 1945

My dear Bhim Sen,

I have received your letter of 24 December. I understand from Sjt. Sarat Chandra Bose that he is coming to your province for a few days, and I hope that his visit will be helpful in creating an atmosphere in favour of the Congress so far as the elections are concerned. It would be unfortunate if his visit results in accentuating party differences. I am afraid that some people there may try to exploit this occasion for party purposes.

The Congress there would be greatly discredited if we are to lose in the non-Muslim General constituencies anywhere, and particularly if we lose in the Commerce and University constituencies. The labour seat, where you have put your own president as a candidate, must also be won.

The Punjab is a prosperous province and a key province of Pakistan. It should not be difficult for the Congress to raise

any amount of money for this all-important issue, which affects the Punjab most, but if in spite of this you and your colleagues feel that some help from outside is necessary, I should do my best to help you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Bhim Sen Sachar
Lahore

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Lahore
2 January 1946

My dear Sardarji,

Many thanks for your letters of 25 and 30 December 1945. I am sorry for the delay in replying to your letter of the 25th ultimo earlier. I have wired you today explaining that the delay has been due to my absence from station in connection with the Assembly elections.

I do not want to add to your distress by joining my observations with yours on the state of things prevailing in the Punjab. As a Punjabi I am thoroughly ashamed of it. All that I can say is that my humble services are unreservedly at your disposal and I shall consider it my great privilege to be able to comply with your instructions which, I request, you should be good enough to give to me from time to time. I shall make every endeavour to live up to them.

No doubt some nominations of Congress candidates are being very adversely commented upon by the public, but to my mind this is not the time to go into their merits or demerits. At present our only concern is to secure the largest Congress successes. My appreciation of the situation is that if we have sufficient funds at our disposal we may be able to annex extra six or seven seats. As it is, given proper transport facilities, for which again funds are necessary, we expect to capture the following seats:

(a) General seats . . . 33

The total number of general seats is 43. The losses represent Scheduled Caste seats and Hindu seats from Ambala Division and Kangra district.

(b) The estimate of Sikh seats varies from six to seven. It is urged that if properly financed two or three extra seats can be won.

(c) The Congress may hardly get two Muslim seats.

(d) From the special seats we expect to secure the University and the Commerce seats. We are experiencing sufficient difficulties in these seats, but I expect we shall ultimately succeed by the grace of God.

(e) Nothing can as yet be said with certainty about the Labour seats. The chances are not without hope.

Some think we may capture one of the Landlord seats also, although Dr. Gopichand takes the opposite view.

Some think the Muslim League may capture even 50 seats but the general opinion is that the Muslim League's strength may be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 40 seats. I am given to understand that if Ahrars are properly financed they may secure 2 or 3 Muslim seats. This will, therefore, not leave more than about 40 Muslim seats for the Unionists.

Although, as I have written to you before, we are trying to raise funds locally; it appears to me and to other friends that financial aid [from] your end is absolutely unavoidable. The transport arrangements cost a lot. You may, therefore, kindly convey to the provincial president the amount that you would be good enough to place at the disposal of the Provincial Congress Committee with full instructions as to the manner in which the money should be utilised. We are racing against time. If there were sufficient time at our disposal and a proper election campaign could have been organised, we should not have stood in need of your help to the extent that we do now. It is expected that the visit of Sjt. Sarat Chandra Bose will be utilised for raising some funds for the elections.

With respects,

Yours sincerely,
Bhim Sen Sachar

8 January 1946

My dear Bhim Sen,

I have your letter this morning. I had a long talk with Seth Sudarshan before I got your letter. You will learn everything from him about what I have to say, and therefore I will not write anything in this letter as I am hard-pressed for time also. It would be a misfortune if you, Dr. Gopichand and Maulana Daud would

fail to act with one mind and one voice at this critical period in the history of our country. The Punjab holds the key to the future of India and you three have to play a most important role in that stage at this hour. May I expect you all to forget personal prejudices and have a frank and open talk so that you can come to one common plan of action in order that we may be able to [play] our cards well? If you make a joint demand endorsed by all the three, I will not question your judgment or hesitate to help you. I shall only expect you to consider that I have to meet with the requirements of the whole country. Therefore, don't ask me to give you anything which may not be required and see that the money is spent carefully and with proper economy.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Bhim Sen Sachar
Lahore

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11 January 1946

My dear Bhim Sen,

I am awaiting a reply to my letter sent through Seth Sudarshan. I trust you three have discussed my suggestion and come to some reasonable solution. It would be a pity if in this crisis you three would not agree and leave me without any proper guidance. I am anxious to help you all to the best of my ability and I see no difficulty in doing so, if you all agree. From the 16th onwards, for more than a week, I will be in Delhi.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Bhim Sen Sachar
Lahore

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27 November 1945

My dear Duni Chand,

I have received your letter of the 24th inst. Maulana Mohd. Yasin met me in Bombay at the time of the AICC meeting and we had a long talk about the Punjab situation. He was president

of the Punjab Provincial 'Congress Workers' Assembly and must therefore be having considerable influence, but his selection as a candidate for the Provincial Assembly and his choice for a constituency can be made by the Central Board and by himself respectively. It is not open for me to do so. You are aware that the meeting of the Central Board has been fixed by the President at Calcutta on the 4th, when the Punjab selections are to be considered. It would be improper for me to suggest anything for which I may not be able to secure approval.

In the past attempts have been made by fanatic Muslims and other interested persons on my life, but I have escaped by the grace of Providence, while, instead of me, some other persons have been killed. To take the life of any person is not in the hands of an individual or a group of persons. It rests with God only. If my work is finished in this world and am wanted elsewhere my life will end but it will be only in the manner in which it is destined to end and in no other way. However, I must thank you for your caution.

I have got your letter to Sjt. Asaf Ali, who has forwarded it to me. It will be placed before the Board.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Lala Duni Chand
Advocate
Kripa Nivas Cottage
Ambala City

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TELEGRAM

Calcutta
20 December 1945

Sardar Patel
Care Congress
Bombay

DISTRESSED TO LEARN SARDAR SARDUL SINGH DID NOT RECEIVE CONGRESS NOMINATION. SEEK YOUR INTERVENTION.

SARATBOSE

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TELEGRAM

22 December 1945

Sarat Bose
Woodburn Park
Calcutta

YOUR WIRE. BOARD GAVE FULL AUTHORITY TO MAULANA DAUD FOR
SIKH NOMINATIONS. HAVE WIRED ACCOMMODATE IF POSSIBLE.

VALLABHBHAI

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TELEGRAM

Calcutta
23 December 1945

Sardar Patel
Care Congress
Bombay

FAILED TO GET YOU PHONE LAST NIGHT THIS MORNING. SHALL TRY
AGAIN TONIGHT. UNDERSTAND SARDAR INDER SINGH MILLOWNER
CAWNPORE [now Kanpur] WITH NO RECORD PUBLIC WORK PRE-
FERRED BY PUNJAB CONGRESS TO SARDUL SINGH. KINDLY RECTIFY
WRONG DONE TO SARDUL SINGH.

SARATBOSE

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Calcutta
23 December 1945

My dear Sardar,

I am enclosing herewith the relevant portion of Shri Ramrup
Sharma's letter to me dated the 18th inst. which was to hand
yesterday.

I could never anticipate that Sardar Sardul Singh would
be refused Congress nomination and that a gentleman who has

never lived in the Punjab' and had no record of public work to his credit, would be preferred by the Punjab Congress. If you can do anything to rectify the wrong done to Sardar Sardul Singh, I shall feel grateful.

Your telephone call yesterday came at a time when I was out. I tried to get you on the phone last night and also this morning but did not succeed. Fortunately, Nathalal got me on the phone last night and I told him that I would request Sjt. Suresh Chandra Majumdar [proprietor of Hindusthan Standard and Ananda Bazar Patrika, Calcutta] not to publish in his papers messages regarding the so-called contest for leadership of the Opposition of the Central Assembly. I spoke to Suresh Babu last night and he told me that he would give my message to the editors of his papers.

I hope you are improving steadily.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sarat Chandra Bose

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

ENCLOSURE

1 Mission Road
Lahore
18 December 1945

My dear Sarat Babu Sahib,

I regret to inform you that this time again [Sardul Singh] Caveeshar has been refused the Congress ticket and one S. Inder Singh, millowner, Cawnpur, who has never lived in the Punjab and is a UP man, has been given the Congress ticket. This gentleman has no public work to his credit. In the first instance he wrote to Master Tara Singh seeking the Panthic¹ ticket but when this was refused he applied for the Congress ticket. For the Central Assembly seat S. Sant Singh was given preference over Caveesharji and nominated Congress candidate. S. Sant Singh was never a Congressman. He also applied for the Panthic ticket and when refused he applied for the Congress ticket which was given to him and the Congress lost the seat.

If tried Congressmen are put up against Panthic nominees one can understand but when millowners and millionaires are allowed to put on the

¹ One devoted to cause of Sikh faith

Congress label, as has been done in the case of S. Inder Singh, Sikhs naturally feel that the Congress is putting up a fight not because they have better candidates but because they want to create friction amongst the Sikhs. This feeling is getting stronger and naturally Congress prestige suffers.

I know you are busy with your Bengal affairs but situated as we are, we naturally look up to you for help and guidance.

I have sent a telegram to Caveeshar Sahib intimating to him about the rejection of his application. He is alone in a small jail in the hills. You can imagine his feelings.

Yours sincerely,
Ramrup Sharma

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TELEGRAM

Lyallpur
22 December 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Congress Parliamentary Board
Bombay

DISINTEGRATION AMONGST AKALIS STARTED. THEY STAND THOROUGHLY EXPOSED. PLEASE DECLINE ADJUSTMENT. LETTER FOLLOWS.

SANTSINGH

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26 December 1945

My dear Sarat,

I have received your letter of the 23rd inst. I am enclosing herewith a copy of a reply received by me from Maulana Daud Ghaznavi who was requested to accommodate [Sardul Singh] Caveeshar for the provincial seat. I tried my best but as I had expected I did not succeed. I am expecting a progress report from you since I left regarding the Provincial Assembly elections. I trust that things are going on well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose
Calcutta

23 December 1945

My dear Maulana Sahib,

You know that the negotiations between the Congress and the Akalis have failed. Sardar Baldev Singh has issued a statement vigorously attacking the Punjab Congress organisation for the failure and for some of the nominations made by them. I am enclosing herewith a Press cutting for your perusal.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT

Defining the attitude of the Sikhs, he said that the Sikhs would not tolerate the representative character of anyone regarding the Sikh seats unless we were satisfied that Sikh interest would be protected with the same zeal as the larger national interests. "The Sikhs have repeatedly made it clear that they stand for the freedom and integrity of India; they stood with the Congress in the past and will continue to do so. Who in his senses doubts this prevailing and unanimous Sikh sentiment?"

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TELEGRAM

Lahore
30 December 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Powerfarm
Bombay

UNIONISTS AKALIS LEAGUERS COMMUNISTS VEHEMENTLY OPPOSING
CONGRESS CANDIDATES. REQUEST YOU ASK PANDIT JAWAHARLAL
TOUR PUNJAB SECOND OR THIRD WEEK JANUARY. PLEASE WIRE.

M. DAUDGHAZNAVI

2 January 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of 30 December. We have no knowledge of any talk of compromise with the Akalis to which you refer in your letter. You say that you will be able to defeat Sardar Baldev Singh, but you do not say anything about how many Sikh seats will be secured by the Congress. That really would be a test of Congress strength amongst the Sikhs. Defeat of a single individual would not solve our problem nor should it be regarded as a great victory. We have nothing personal against any individual. We are fighting for a cause for which we want to win all sections of people on our side.

I regret I am not yet strong enough to come there. I would advise Congressmen in the Punjab to forget petty differences and face big issues with large mindedness and stout heart. There should be no quarrels or parties or factions amongst Congressmen in the Punjab, which is the key province and which holds the future of India in the balance. We must all unite and fight the forces of reaction and disintegration.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Dila Ram
Secretary, Tehsil Congress Committee
Rupar

EXTRACTS

Bradlaugh Hall
Lahore
4 January 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Both the Unionists and the Akalis are struggling to make use of the Congress in order to achieve power for themselves. Their main interest is not, and never has been, to assist the

Congress to down the Muslim League, but to achieve power even at the expense of the Congress.

I as the custodian of the honour and prestige of the Congress in this province cannot and will not allow the Congress to be made a pawn in this game of power politics.

I now proceed to deal with the matters mentioned in your letter detail by detail. It is the first time through your letter that I learnt that Baldev Singh offered us half the seats. Whenever Baldev Singh spoke to me either in your presence or in the presence of Dr. Gopichand or whenever any message was given to me on his behalf either by his secretary [B.S.] Gilani or by Dr. Gopichand, at no time was an offer of half the Sikh seats made to us. Baldev Singh has always said only this: "Let us see who have the best chance and choose accordingly." But whenever the question of our best candidates cropped up, none of them, strangely enough, in his opinion had a chance.

You will recall that in Calcutta we were given a mandate by you to settle with the Akalis on the basis that they would not put up their candidates against us in 16 or 17 seats. When I and Dr. Gopichand on our return met Baldev Singh on two or three occasions, after difficult arguments, he agreed to this proposal which fell short of your mandate but in the interest of unity we accepted it. The proposal was:

- (i) that we would not be opposed by the Akalis in ten constituencies;
- (ii) that the Congress would not oppose the Akalis in ten constituencies;
- (iii) that we would have a contest in five seats between Congress and Akalis;
- (iv) that in 7 seats the Congress would not oppose the Akalis because they thought that the Congress had no strong candidates to put up in these seats.

We were ready to accept even this but when the negotiations were nearing completion, in the presence of Dr. Gopichand, Sohan Singh, Jalal-Usman a lieutenant of Master Tara Singh, got up and opposed this and Baldev Singh was unable to carry it through with the Akalis.

Subsequently we came to the following agreement with Baldev Singh. Some 16 or 17 Communists are contesting Sikh seats, out of which four are serious candidates. We agreed that the Akalis should contest two seats against the Communists and we would

put up no candidates and that we should contest the two other Communist seats and that the Akalis would not put up their candidates for these two seats. This agreement was accepted by the Akalis and was brought into action.

We have now declared 23 Sikh candidates and 3 more names will be announced, if favourable. Again there is a move by the Akalis offering six or seven seats only in which they will withdraw their candidates stating that in return we should withdraw all our candidates from all our seats. These six or seven include those two seats in which we are fighting the Communists. This is no settlement at all. Sikh Nationalist Congressmen are adamant and declare that nowadays there can be no compromise. Their honour is at stake. Four weeks remain for the polling and at this stage to talk of letting our nationalist friends down is to commit suicide.

In regard to the Hindu seats, the total is 35. Out of this 11 rural seats belong to Ambala, four rural to Kangra and two rural to Hoshiarpur which are known as Jat or Rajput seats. The candidates nominated to these seats are those whose nomination was agreed to by Dr. Gopichand as also by all other parties except in one case. It is here that we have our main contest with the Unionists.

Finally there are eight scheduled caste seats. By a resolution of the election board Dr. Gopichand was given the sole authority to make nominations to these seats and although the elections are far advanced he has made announcements in respect of only four persons so far, one seat having been lost to the Unionists already by carelessness. We have pending applications from the other three Harijan seats and I am sure if funds are provided we can win all these Harijan seats.

Originally we had 15 Muslim candidates and we dropped four as we did not want to press weak candidates. Out of the remaining 11, eight are fairly strong and I have a strong feeling that six of our men must win provided we can give them adequate funds.

Let me here make it clear that the advice given by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was to the effect that we must put up candidates everywhere in order that we should be able to create a favourable atmosphere for our propaganda.

It is not by adjusting a seat here with the Akalis or a seat there with the Unionists that we could carry the flag of the Congress to victory in the province.

You will agree with me that it is wrong that any responsible worker should send misleading reports and not even inform me of what he is doing.

Yours sincerely,
M. Daud Ghaznavi
President
PP Congress Committee, Lahore

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8 January 1946

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I have received your letter of the 4th instant through Seth Sudarshan. You are under a misapprehension in believing that my last letter to you was based upon information supplied to me by Dr. Gopichand. The fact is that I have received several letters from various sources in the Punjab, both Congress and non-Congress. My letter contained the substance of all this information and the undercurrent of all these sources was practically uniform.

I have explained my position fully to Seth Sudarshan. Mr. Gilani came here at the time when Sudarshan was here and so they had also a frank talk in my presence.

I had a letter from Mr. Bhim Sen Sachar and his opinion about the Punjab situation did not materially differ from that given by Dr. Gopichand. Maulvi Gani also met me here three days ago and he also practically supported the same view. He asked for financial help and he said that all that was wanted was Rs. 2 lakhs and if that was given we would get 51 seats. He did not know that I had sent Rs. 1 lakh previously. When Mr. Bhim Sen phoned to me, it was for the first time that I learnt about a much bigger demand. It was further improved upon in the budget which Seth Sudarshan brought to me. Dr. Gopichand's estimate almost tallied with Maulvi Gani's demand. It is difficult for me to act under these conflicting demands, but if you, Mr. Bhim Sen and Dr. Gopichand sit together and frame a common demand in agreement endorsed by all the three, I will have no hesitation in meeting your requirements.

If the proposals for a settlement with the Akalis, which is being discussed by Seth Sudarshan and Mr. Gilani, result in some agreement, it may result in a substantial reduction of your estimate.

It must be clearly understood that I will do my best to help you provided you help me in setting matters straight there. As things have been explained to Seth Sudarshan in detail, I will not write all that I have to say in this letter, but if things go wrong there, the responsibility will not be mine but will have to be shared fully by all of you there.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana M. Daud Ghaznavi
President
Punjab PCC

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5 January 1946

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I invite your attention to a complaint received from Sardar Ajit Singh of Amritsar, of which a copy is enclosed herewith. Similar complaints have been received against the selection of Sardar Inder Singh signed by various people, including the United Provinces Sikh Association.

Maulvi Gani of Ludhiana saw me twice during the last two-three days. He wants me to give financial help for the Punjab and I have received your telegram today intimating that Seth Sudarshan is coming for that purpose. You must have received my letter sent through a messenger and I am awaiting your reply.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Daud Ghaznavi
Lahore

ENCLOSURE

Bagh Rama Nand
Amritsar
29 December 1945

Dear Sardar Patel,

Before coming to the point I wish to introduce myself to you. I am an old worker of the Congress from my boyhood when I was only 16 years old. I have been to jail for the Congress cause during my teens and am still a true soldier of the Congress. I am a voter of the Punjab Legislative Assembly and have a large following of voters.

The constituency to which I belong has been offered by the Punjab Congress to S. Inder Singh of Cawnpore, a capitalist and millowner. So far as I know he has not moved his little finger for the cause of the Congress or the country and one fails to understand why such a man has been given the Congress ticket ignoring the claims of men like Sardul Singh Caveeshar and S. Bhag Singh who have dedicated their lives to the service of the country and have glorious records of sacrifices and sufferings to their credit. We voters who are pledged to the Congress cause feel rather reluctant to cast our votes for this Congress candidate.

Similar is the case of Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew, the well-known Congress worker in the Punjab, whose claims have been ignored by the Congress President and who himself has taken the ticket for the seat originally promised to Dr. Kitchlew. The whole Congress organisation of the Punjab has become totally rotten due to unbridgeable party friction amongst the office-bearers and requires immediate weeding out. We voters are now in a fix, specially in the case of S. Inder Singh, Congress candidate, while on the other hand Congress discipline demands from us the unconditional support to the Congress candidate. Similar may be the case of voters in most of the constituencies of the Punjab. Truly speaking the Punjab Congress is a blot on the fair name of the grand organisation of the All India Congress.

We seek your valuable advice in the matter and hope you will not withhold the same from us and oblige us at your earliest convenience.

It is being openly talked in the bazar that Congress tickets are being sold to capitalists in the Punjab.

Yours truly,
Ajit Singh

5 January 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of 29 December today. The selection of Sikh candidates was entrusted to the Punjab Congress president, Maulana Daud, and we know nothing about the selection of Sardar Inder Singh from there. You must approach the Punjab election board for this purpose, as it is too late for us to interfere in this matter at this late stage.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sardar Ajit Singh
Amritsar

Bindhachal
6 January 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I had not seen the statement of Sardar Baldev Singh which you have sent to me. We had directed Ghaznavi in Calcutta that he along with Dr. Gopichand and Pratap Singh [Kairon] should negotiate with the Akalis. He has informed me that no acceptable settlement is possible. However, if you consider that it would be better to reach a settlement, it can be possible even now. This can be done by withdrawing the Congress Sikh candidates against whom they may have an objection, and thus end the mutual opposition against the remaining candidates. I am sending a letter to Lahore and if Baldev Singh is in communication with you, you may tell him what you consider best. I will fully agree with your view.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

Bombay
10 January 1946

My dear Maulana Sahib,

I have received your letter of the 6th instant. In my previous letter I had informed you that there is a possibility of the Sikh question in the Punjab being solved by an amicable settlement if the parties there agree on the tentative arrangement settled between Seth Sudarshan and Mr. Gilani here. I am awaiting the result on their report. Perhaps you will hear about it at Delhi.

Mr. Gilani had brought a letter from Baldev Singh to me, but as Seth Sudarshan was present, I asked him to discuss the whole question with Gilani and come to some understanding, if possible. He has done so, and so I had to make no suggestion.

The most important question, so far as the Punjab is concerned, is the determination of our attitude towards the Unionist Party, because soon after the elections are over there will be no time left to settle this matter. The Congress in the Punjab is not united and as there is no responsible men there who can settle this matter, we must do so at Delhi when we meet.

I have received your telegram today fixing the 16th as the date of the board's meeting and I am reaching Delhi on that day at about 11-30 a.m. by air from Ahmedabad. I am staying with the Birlas there.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Bindhachal

8 January 1946

My dear Gopichand,

You know that Seth Sudarshan had come here with a letter from Maulana Daud particularly with the object of securing financial help. The budget that he has sent is about six lakhs of rupees. You must have known about it by this time. Mr. Bhim Sen Sachar had telephoned to me before Sudarshan was sent, suggesting that they wanted five lakhs of rupees. I had told him then that his demand had come as a surprise to me. I had also told him that I had written a letter to you and to Maulana Daud. It was also suggested by me that you three should meet together and come to some adjustment and make a common demand, so that I may be able to help.

Gilani has come here also. He and Sudarshan had a discussion in my presence. They have, after a good deal of discussion, come to a tentative agreement about the Sikh constituencies, and if this agreement is adopted there, perhaps much of the trouble would disappear. I have written to Sardar Baldev Singh, and I am enclosing herewith copies of my letters to Maulana Daud and to Sardar Baldev Singh and Bhim Sen Sachar for your information. If your attitude would be helpful and all of you think that this is a good workable arrangement, it should be allowed to go through.

I am distressed to find that you are being isolated, i.e. you are losing your friends one after another and you are not frank with them, nor are they frank with you. Seth Sudarshan was your man. I find that there is a distance between him and you. You cannot afford to lose your men like this. However, these are matters on which we can talk when we meet.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Lahore

1 Bromhead Road
Lahore
5 January 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib, .

I have written to you a separate letter today giving some details of the activities of local Congressmen which have created a most unfortunate situation in this province. Here I would like to make a few observations on matters which Malik Khizr Hyat and I have discussed:

1. Owing to growing complications within the local Congress ranks—complications which have prevented any possibility of mutual confidence between Malik Sahib and local Congress leaders—it has not been possible to arrive at any arrangement for post-election co-operation as between the Congress Party and Malik Sahib's party. This is most unfortunate even for election purposes. The position today is that, contrary to the understanding given by Maulana Azad, the local Congress is fighting the elections without any consideration for either the Unionist candidates or Sikh candidates.

2. Presuming that at some near date or immediately after the elections, the Congress does agree to either support Malik Sahib's party in the Legislature or joins the Ministry on some agreed political programme, the position today is that if it is the anti-Gopichand group which predominates in the Congress Party, then Malik Sahib will find it almost impossible to co-operate with the Congress Party. The collaboration will be most shaky and entirely without mutual confidence. You will appreciate that any legislative programme or ministerial combine will be unsafe both for the province and for its stability.

If some collaboration with Malik Sahib is still contemplated, if only to keep the Muslim League out, it is most essential now not to encourage anti-Gopichand party men. Please pardon my presumption, but I make bold to say, as explained in the accompanying letter, that candidates put up by the local Congress are in fact not Congressmen at all. It is therefore easy to get rid of them at this stage.

Malik Sahib has made it plain that if the Congress do want his collaboration, he should not be made to accept men on whom he cannot rely. He is quite prepared to have the collaboration of Dr. Gopichand and of such Congressmen on whom Malik Sahib and Gopichand can agree.

3. Regarding the Sikh position, I am constrained to say that precisely for reasons explained above, and unless the rot in Congress ranks can be arrested, a group may arise which will tend to work against the Congress group within the Legislature. What its implications might be I can not foresee at this stage. All I will say is that it has not been an easy task for me to weaken the anti-Congress elements among the Sikhs. These elements may raise their heads again, if there is the least fear—as I have explained in the other letter,—of some Congressmen seeking political alliance with the League. The anti-Congress Sikhs will, in such a case, do likewise and break up Sikh nationalist solidarity, built up with so much labour.

4. I would earnestly beg you to give due weight to my observations. You may discuss the matter with your colleagues, for the situation is grave enough in the province, but I would not like you at this stage to disclose the source of this information. The position of Malik Sahib is most delicate.

Yours sincerely,
Baldev Singh

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8 January 1946

My dear Sardar Baldev Singh,

I have received your letter of the 5th instant through Mr. Gilani yesterday. It is unfortunate that Punjab affairs have become more complicated. If you had been able to come to Calcutta when a message was sent, perhaps things would have taken a turn for the better. Yesterday both Seth Sudarshan and Mr. Gilani met at my place. They had frank and free discussions and as a result of this they have agreed upon some proposals for the settlement of the Congress-Akali dispute regarding the elections. They are both coming there and if these proposals are accepted by you and the local Congress, this unfortunate chapter may end and so far as the Congress and the Akalis are concerned, it may also clear the way for a better understanding

between the Congress and the Unionist Party. As these two friends have agreed on a common formula with concrete proposals, it will be, I hope, easy for both parties to accept it. If you will contribute your own share in the settlement in the proper spirit, I think that the affairs will be straightened there.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

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30 January 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 26th inst. The election results are not surprising. In the communal electorates, no better result can be expected when communal feelings are worked up on communal slogans. It is not possible to win the goodwill of the Muslim majority so long as these constitutional barriers are not removed. The remedy you suggest is not likely to solve the problem. We have a Muslim president in the Congress since five years and it has not affected the result, but this is a question of high politics which cannot be discussed in correspondence or in public. It is for the Working Committee to give a proper lead to the Congress at the proper time. No individual member can do so without breach of etiquette or propriety.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Amrit Lal Malhotra
C/o Hitkari Bros.
Jhelum

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Warris Road
Lahore
10 February 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Many thanks for your kind letter received through my man and also for your generous help to Dr. Gopichand.

Affairs in Sind have taken an adverse turn. Maulana Sahib's offer of coalition to the League came as a great surprise after

what you had already settled. I am afraid this has not been without its repercussions here. Somehow these offers come at a time when people begin to see the end of communalism and then the same old fears start afresh again. Anti-Muslim League Muslims cannot understand these things, nor can the rest of us. Coming at this time, the news was upsetting, as you will doubtless appreciate.

You must have heard the good news that Dr. Gopichand has defeated his opponent. He worked against heavy odds and opposition came from wholly unexpected quarters. His victory is the one relieving feature in so many difficulties with which the province is faced.

The aftermath of no settlement with the Sikhs is disconcerting, to say the least. Bitterness is going deep and is spreading. Already there are the old whispers of a pro-League drift all over again, which I must not conceal from you. All this along with what I have said above makes a sorry picture. And yet we struggle on with faith. My hope is that somehow you will yet find it possible to give this province your helping hand. By this time next week, the result of the current elections will be clearer than they are today. I will, if possible, speak to you on the phone if you are in Bombay.

Yours sincerely,
B.S. Gilani

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13 February 1946

My dear Gilani,

I have received your letter of the 10th inst.

In Sind the Governor, who is reputed to be pro-League, is trying his hand at the game and he has unduly favoured the League leader in calling him. His act was thoroughly unconstitutional, but I hope that this false show will not last long.

Maulana's offer is his own and is not likely to affect much. He went to Assam and made a similar offer which is still pending. Nothing is going to come out of it.

Dr. Gopichand's success was certain but I hear that R. B. [Rai Bahadur] Mukandlal Puri worked for him wholeheartedly. What were the odds against him, I have not yet learnt from anybody.

The Sikh question is giving us trouble and so long as Master Tara Singh is the leader of the Akali party, there is hardly any chance of easing the situation. He makes bitter attacks on the Congress and flirts with the League and the Government alternatively. In the Frontier, where he should support the Congress, he has been fighting unnecessarily.

I do not know what is the strength of the Unionists at this stage. If the Unionists maintain their position vis-a-vis the League, as was expected, everything will be all right but if it is weakened, it would be bad for the Congress. Other difficulties will be straightened if the Unionist front against the League is not weakened.

For the next fortnight I am busy here as I have to make final selections of candidates of Nagpur, Andhra, Tamil Nad, Kerala and Orissa. I have also to look to the Bombay provincial elections.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. B.S. Gilani
Lahore

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Lahore
18 February 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Many thanks for your kind letter of the 13th. received yesterday. Dr. Gopichand will have seen you by the time this reaches your hands and you will have all the information from him. The havoc caused by Maulana [Azad] Sahib's offer of coalition to the League is becoming more apparent as Punjab election results are being announced. Most of us doubt today if the Unionists get more than 25 Muslim seats. If however they succeed in forming the Ministry, this number might well exceed 45.

You'll have to tackle the Sikh problem with sympathy. For the moment I am having to listen to all manner of "abuse"—an unpleasant situation for the moment. The fact is that there is little prospect of any change in leadership—more so on account of the bitterness of the fight pitted against Sardar Baldev Singh. If as I hope you'll come here soon, I would request you to stay with S. Baldev Singh. He has already invited you. This gesture will make a lot of difference.

A word about Indian Christian candidates for Madras. I hope you will very kindly accept my suggestions. I hear Dr. Ram Chandra Rao is being offered a seat in the Upper House. His place is in the Assembly and he is a certain win, in a Catholic city—though himself a Protestant. The Catholic candidate has little support. Kindly also keep in mind Mr. Pias from Mangalore, Mr. Roche Victoria from Tuticorin and both Mr. and Mrs Massilamani Pillai of the same place. Dr. John of Madras will have little support. In Madura, Thomas Daniel was recommended for the Centre; he will be a good man to win in that area.

With respects,

Yours sincerely,
B.S. Gilani

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Bombay
24 February 1946

My dear Gilani,

It seems it is Providence's will that prevents my coming to the Punjab; every time something or other happens. This time I had fixed my programme and informed all concerned, booked my passage by air also, but at the last moment I had to abandon the visit on account of the very grave situation that developed here and it was not possible for me to leave Bombay in such a condition. About 250 people have been shot dead and about 1,000 have been wounded. Never before such a thing has happened in the history of Bombay. The Defence Forces except the Army in Bombay are all on strike and the naval ratings had a pitched battle with the military guards, resulting in a general strike in the city as a demonstration of sympathy towards them. This involved the city into considerable trouble; continuous conflicts between the goondas¹ and the military resulted in heavy casualties of many innocent people. I cannot leave the city in this condition and so Punjabis must settle their problems amongst themselves with the help of Maulana. I trust there will be no quarrel as he also wants to settle with the Unionists and Akalis.

¹ Hoodlums



PREMIER KHIZR HYAT KHAN OF PUNJAB AND MAULANA AZAD



MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH AND LIAQAT ALI KHAN AT MEETING OF MUSLIM LEAGUE EXECUTIVE

The result of the elections is very disappointing. The Unionists' strength is considerably crippled and their existence almost precarious. With the acceptance of office in coalition with the Congress and the Akalis, they may be able to increase their strength after some time, but for the present they have been floored. The Akalis will be guided by Master Tara Singh and his colleagues, who are a difficult lot to deal with. They distrust everybody and their policy is uncertain. Let us hope things will be all right.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. B.S. Gilani
Lahore

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20 February 1946

My dear Bhim Sen,

I have received your letter of the 14th inst. Dr. Gopichand has also come here to acquaint me with the situation. I had requested Maulana [Azad] Sahib to proceed to Lahore as soon as possible. Unfortunately he was not well but I telephoned to him in the morning and he is coming there on the 25th or 26th latest. He will be in Peshawar on the 23rd and 24th. Perhaps his presence may not be needed before the 25th, as all the election results will not be out before that.

It is unfortunate that the Unionist Party has suffered a setback. Its strength has been greatly reduced. The League has scored better than expected. It is not good for the province nor for the country. We have therefore not much to enthuse over our strength. I see that there is no possibility of our getting any seat from the Muslim constituencies nor have the independent Muslims any chance. It means that all our efforts and resources there have been wasted and all hopes given were false and the calculations and expectations were wrong.

There is a lot of misapprehension prevailing in the Punjab about our attitude. I do not know why it should be so. We can have no truck with the League. Our position regarding coalition with the Unionists and the Akalis stands unaffected and with the combination of three forces, the League will have no chance. Of course, it will give more trouble because of its strength at the

polls, but if we can handle the situation with a spirit of sacrifice and with unity, we will still be able to brush aside all difficulties. I do wish that the Congress ranks will realise how delicate the situation is and will resist the temptation of running after offices and entering into competition for getting a due share of posts.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Bhim Sen Sachar
Lahore

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Bombay
13 February 1946

My dear Gopichand,

I have received your wire of the 12th inst. reading:

"WIRE WHEN CAN I MEET YOU. POLLING FINISHES FIFTEENTH RESULTS
LATEST TWENTYTHIRD. CONVENIENTLY START 17TH."

and my reply has also been telegraphed to you today as follows:

"YOUR WIRE. CAN MEET NINETEENTH."

If you start on the 17th according to your wire, you can reach here on the 19th. I am here during that week or probably during the whole of the second fortnight and hence you can come whenever you like.

I see from Press reports that there were troubles in some Muslim constituencies and the election results will be delayed.

Reports received here from independent sources convey an impression that the League is getting stronger and the Unionists' strength is crippling. I do not know what is the real position. In any case, it seems clear that neither the Congress nor the independents will get any Muslim seats except one or two. The Sikh position is not very clear, but evidently they seem to be angry with the Congress. More can be known when you come here.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, MLA
Lahore

Bombay
13 February 1946

My dear Seth Sudarshan,

I have received your telegram of the 11th inst. regarding Una General Rural Rajput constituency in which the Unionist candidate, Rai Sahib Harichand, withdrew in the middle of polling and hence the Congress candidate, Pandit Mohanlal, wins. This evidently means that you have taken one of the Hindu seats from the Unionists. It is not a great consolation. What we want in Punjab is to cripple the League's strength or to gain a large number of seats from the Akalis. Evidently there is no sign of the Congress getting any strength at the cost of the League or the Akalis. From all reports received through independent sources, it appears that the Unionist party is being crippled and the League is getting stronger. If that is true, all our other successes will be of less value comparatively from the political point of view. I am therefore more interested in knowing the position of the Unionists vis-a-vis the League, and am still more interested to know how many seats the Congress or the independent Muslims will get from the Muslim constituencies. I also want to know how many Sikh seats will be gained by the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Seth Sudarshan
C/o The Punjab Provincial Congress Committee
Bradlaugh Hall
Lahore

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TELEGRAM

23 February 1946

- (1) Doctor Gopichand
Lahore
- (2) Maulana Daud
Lahore

REGRET VERY GRAVE SITUATION HERE NECESSITATES CANCELLATION
LAHORE VISIT.

VALLABHBHAI

CHAPTER VII
SIND POLITICS

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Poona
6 November 1945

My dear Dr. Choithram,¹

I get reports from Sind from various sources which are disturbing. Sind Congressmen appear to be still agitated about the inclusion of Mr. Nihchaldas Vazirani. However unpleasant the decision may be, in the interest of the future work of the Congress in the province, Congressmen should accept it in good spirit and proceed further unanimously and with one voice.

I hear you intend to drop Mr. [Bhai] Pratap. I am afraid it will create difficulties of a serious nature. He has been helping you all in all your activities and his omission will be resented by his friends who are very influential in the Congress. I am told he would be very helpful in the Assembly under the present conditions and if he is given the Congress ticket his seat is secure and perhaps there will be no contest. His omission may result in [our] losing the seat. I would advise you to reconsider the whole situation before sending your proposals to the Centre.

I also hear another more disturbing report, which is about the possibility of Mr. Sidhwa's omission. I hope your committee will not make such a grievous mistake. Its repercussions will not only be provincial but will have disturbing consequences on a wider sphere.

When should I expect your proposals and what is the date fixed for nomination?

I am glad the Central Assembly election has been won without any opposition. What about the Muslim seat in the Centre? Is the position of the League serious and has the opponent any

¹ Congress leader of Sind; President, Sind PCG before Independence; chief spokesman of Sind in Congress organisation

chance of success? What is the Congress attitude in this matter? Please reply by air mail.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Choithram Gidwani
C/o The Hindu
Karachi

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TELEGRAM

Karachi
8 November 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai
Poona

RECEIVED. EVIDENTLY INCORRECT REPORTS REACHING YOU. SIDHWA ALREADY SELECTED. REGARDING BHAI PRATAP BOARD UNANIMOUSLY FELT IMPOSSIBLE OVERRIDE CLAIMS VISHNU SHARMA STAUNCH CONGRESSMAN THIRTY YEARS STANDING. BOARD REPRESENTS VARIOUS GROUPS. ALL DECISIONS FINALLY UNANIMOUS. EXPECT GOOD NUMBER UNCONTESTED SEATS.

CHOITHRAM

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Poona
10 November 1945

My dear Choithram,

I have just received your telegram. Bhai Pratap has already sent his appeal. He has written to Kripalani also. A number of Amils from 27 Amil Colony have sent a representation which, among other things, states that any other candidate will be certainly opposed by a Hindu Mahasabha candidate or other influential Bhaibandh, which will certainly endanger the sure Congress seat and that if Bhai Pratap is selected this seat would go uncontested. It is also alleged that his omission has aroused feelings which have travelled in two neighbouring constituencies and endangered two more seats. But it is for you all to consider. I must just keep you informed of what is being received from there.

I read in the Press today that the Muslim League has taken action against Haroon's opponent. What are his chances? Is he likely to defeat Haroon? Notice has also been issued against Syed. But probably this is a domestic quarrel and in the end they would all make up, perhaps after the elections.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Choithram Gidwani
Karachi

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EXTRACTS

Trade Unions' Office
Kutchery Road
Karachi
14 November 1945

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

You know indefatigable Dr. Popatlal very well. He has been our representative in the Sind Legislative Assembly for the last seven years and on account of his integrity, political acumen, and identifying himself with the cause of the poorer classes of society, coupled with persistent hard work both inside and outside the Legislature, has won the confidence and affection of the people of his constituency and, I daresay, of the Congress Party in the Assembly as well as of the Congress for his sense of discipline and loyalty. In my opinion he has been an acquisition to the Congress Party in the Assembly.

It is therefore difficult to imagine why he has been displaced. When the Sind Congress Parliamentary Board have adopted not only a non-Congressman but who was actively engaged in aiding the war effort and, according to the Karachi Daily edited by Dr. Tarachand J. Lalwani, an erstwhile Congressman, is addicted to liquor.

Yours sincerely,
Narayandas

25 November 1945

My dear Narayandas,

I was extremely delighted to see your letter of the 14th inst. after a very long time. I know Dr. Popatlal myself. He has rendered very useful service in the Sind Legislative Assembly during his term of office, but his omission must not be construed to mean that he is in any way inferior to the one who is selected in his place or that any reflection is meant by the omission. It is difficult to make a choice between two good Congressmen, who are both Gujaratis and who have served the Congress well in the past. Why can't they settle the question amongst themselves? The local committee may have some good reasons for their decision. After all, they are all honest, sincere Congress leaders of the province. It is difficult to override their recommendation. Besides, I am one of the seven members of the Central Board, who will have to decide this question. No single member has any authority to hear appeals over the provincial recommendations. The general policy of the Board is to approve the recommendation of the local committee, if it is unanimous. In this case, there is considerable feeling for Dr. Popatlal, but both Dr. Popatlal and Seth Haridas are good friends and you should advise them to settle this question amongst themselves. I cannot say what the decision of the Board will be.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Narayandas Bechar
Trade Unions' Office
Kutchery Road
Karachi

26 November 1945

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 20th inst. You must be aware that Sjt. Kripalani had written to Dr. Choithram and Sjt. Jairamdas to persuade Maharaj Vishnu Sharma to make room for you. He had wired to me also, making a similar suggestion and I had communicated that suggestion by telegram to Dr. Choithram. I do not know the result as I have received no reply, but I understand that both of them are coming to Bombay on Wednesday, the 28th, when it will be possible to know the final decision. Whatever happens, I am sure you will take the decision cheerfully and will not be disturbed with any feeling of disappointment.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Pratap Dialdas
Karachi

Mirpurkhas
Sind

26 November 1945

Dear Sardarji,

I am a member of the selection committee as appointed by the SPCC, to select candidates for the Congress ticket for the ensuing general Assembly elections. The committee went round each constituency to study the situation on the spot, and elicited views of all shades of people and Congress workers, and after an exchange of views and due deliberations have submitted its unanimous recommendations. As natural, some of the applicants were disappointed and I am told that some of the disappointed persons have appealed to the Central Parliamentary Board.

It is the inherent right of such persons, and the Central Parliamentary Board is equally competent to uphold the appeals and set aside the recommendations of the selection board. It is

rather curious, when it is being freely suggested, that the Central Parliamentary Board intends to upset some decisions, specially the Hyderabad urban constituency, from where Maharaj Vishnu Sharma has been recommended. Such a statement from a candidate of Bhai Pratap's calibre, who claims to be a very disciplined Congressman, is certainly deplorable.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vatanmal

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1 December 1945

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of 26 November. I am surprised to read your letter, especially because you happen to be a member of the selection committee of your province. It appears you have not understood your responsibility. The decisions of the Sind Provincial Congress Committee are mere recommendations, and they have no authority to make any final choice. They have only to report on applications and therefore there is no question of appeal. Decisions have to be taken now by the Central Board and they are not bound to accept any recommendation.

Your insinuation that the selection committee was not allowed to function without interference from the authority of the Central Board is wholly unfounded. There has been no interference at all with your committee's work because there was no need for it, as the final authority rests with the Central Board. You assume too much when you think that there was interference within your duty. You have got an exaggerated idea of your authority and therefore you think that any advice given is interference. All applicants have a right to come to the Central Board to put their case and it is open to the Central Board to reject every one of your recommendations. You may therefore think again in terms of your own responsibility and authority.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Vatanmal G. Gidwani, C.M. & S.
Gulabsing Dispensary
Mirpurkhas
Sind

2 December 1945

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter entitled "My appeal to the Congress High Command to resolve the Sind Congress muddle." [See enclosure]. I do not understand why you suggest that the Congress claims that its voice should be considered as the voice of Allah [God]. Certainly the Congress has a right to function as an organisation and it does select its candidates and proposes to place them before the electorate as its nominees, for their choice. The voters are free to vote as they like and all other organisations or individuals are also at liberty to oppose them.

Your statement that the selection board does not enjoy the confidence of the provincial Congress committee is not borne out by facts. The board was deliberately made representative of all groups within the provincial Congress committee and therefore it was unanimously adopted by that committee.

Forty members out of 48 were present; therefore, when you say that it did not enjoy the confidence of the provincial Congress committee, it appears to be inconsistent with facts. The composition of the board is known to you.

The candidates recommended are all opposed to Mr. G. M. Syed and the Muslim League, because both Mr. Syed and the Muslim League represent the same ideology, and they were selected irrespective of party considerations. I see no reason to suppose that any group of candidates would support either Mr. Syed or the League.

All the recommendations except two are unanimous and it may always be argued with a degree of plausibility that any candidate who has been rejected has been a victim of injustice.

I see no reason why Maharaj Vishnu Sharma, if finally adopted, would not be elected unopposed, or if opposed, would not secure a thumping majority. The Congress strength today is not what it was in the last elections. It is much stronger than ever before. Therefore any candidate selected by the Congress will succeed without any difficulty.

Wherever it was necessary, the provincial Congress committee has accommodated candidates from outside its own organisation.

Seth Sirumal has never been in the Congress. It is not expedient nor advisable to give reasons for the rejection of any candidate, as the proceedings of the selection committee are confidential and therefore it would be inadvisable to enter into a controversy on the comparative merits of candidates. It must, however, be understood that the rejection of any candidature does not necessarily involve any slur on the candidate rejected.

I do not understand what you mean to suggest in your last para. The Congress cannot abandon its political functions and surrender its rights and responsibilities to any other organisation, however more representative it may be, but there is nothing to prevent the Sarva Sindh Hindu Panchayat, if it wants, to put its own candidates in the field.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbai Patel

Sjt. Jethmal Parsram
Karachi

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT

MY APPEAL TO THE CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND TO RESOLVE THE SIND CONGRESS MUDDLE

To cut the story short, as the Congress Party by itself is not able to meet the situation, they must be helped by a group of patriotic people detached and disinterested, in bringing about rapprochement between the antagonistic groups in Sind on the simple question of "Sind" without interference from outside Sind in internal matters and a common programme of the common man in Sind.

Jethmal Parsram

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20 December 1945

Dear Nihchaldas,

I got your letter at Calcutta on the same date on which your letter to Maulana [Abul Kalam Azad] Sahib dated the 7th inst. was received.

From the result of Mr. Rashidi's election, it is clear that all optimistic calculations were not justified and there were other reasons for his failure than those that were imagined. Probably

his own personal reputation and character contributed more than the reasons which you thought were responsible for his failure before the result was known. However, that is all past.

Today's papers report that the League High Command did not dare to do anything against Syed and they have settled with him for the present. The question is what will be the repercussions of this settlement and how far it affects our own chances.

I understand Vishnu Sharma's opponent has withdrawn his candidature. Let us hope there will be more withdrawals before scrutiny in the non-Muslim constituencies. What is the position in the Nawabshah constituency now?

Hope you all will now be able to work in co-operation for the Muslim constituencies contest.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Nihchaldas Vazirani

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Mulchand Street
Hyderabad (Sind)
23 December 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I received today, 23rd, your letter of the 20th sent by air mail. It bore the Bombay stamp of 21st. It seems letters from Bombay to Hyderabad take two days, whether they come by rail direct or by air via Delhi. This letter, written on the night of the 23rd, may reach you on the 25th by air via Karachi.

I have posted you today by rail cuttings explaining the latest developments in League affairs. The reference therein to Allama Mashriqi¹ is much exaggerated. Mr. Syed was to come here tonight. I will know tomorrow what transpires further. He is so far much depressed and dejected. It is certain that he feels he has no future except in the League.

The Azad Muslims' nominees and other independents who are being supported by Khan Abdul Samad Khan² and Congressmen are in all about 18. The estimate of those in the know is that about six or seven of these will win. The policy of sup-

¹ Founder of Khaksar movement, a band of fanatics who wore khaki uniforms and carried spades as symbol of militant politics

² Congress leader of Baluchistan known as Baluchi Gandhi

porting a smaller number and those more reliable instead of spreading effort over many may have been a wiser one. It is yet too early to say whether or not a League ministry can be prevented. It will all depend on the number of reliable anti-Leagueurs who succeed.

There is much uncertainty as to who will ultimately contest in the Muslim constituencies as some withdrawals are still expected. In Hyderabad district, a Syed group candidate took money and retired, leaving the field to the League candidate. It may take a few days for the situation to clear.

I was sorry to read that you were feeling the strain of Calcutta and the rail journey. I hope you will soon get over it at Bombay.

I am keeping well.

Love to Maniben.

Yours sincerely,
Jairam

PS.

Before this reaches you may read of Mr. Syed's further step. I think it will weaken him and so strengthen the Khurho party.

J. D.

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26 December 1945

My dear Jairamdas,

I have received your letter of the 23rd inst. The nominations and scrutiny being over, I expect a full report from you both as regards non-Muslim and Muslim constituencies and also the special constituencies. I also expect to hear from you about the estimate you gave me at Calcutta in consultation with Khan Abdul Samad Khan. The proposals for contesting Muslim seats were given to me when your estimate was given. Do these proposals hold good or is there going to be any change?

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sri Jairamdas Doulatram
Hyderabad (Sind)

Congress House
 Girgaon
 Bombay
 24 December 1945

My dear Sidhwa,

I see from the Press that you have been elected unopposed. I am very glad to learn that and I congratulate you for the same.

The split between the two sections of the local League has been joined for the time being and Syed's nominations have been accepted in spite of his defiance. I should like to know from you what is the present position. The nominations and scrutiny must have been over by this time. How many nominations have been filed on behalf of the Congress in the Muslim constituencies and how many have been filed by Independent candidates against the League candidates? What are the chances? Please give me a full picture of the present position as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,
 Vallabhbhai Patel

Sri R. K. Sidhwa, MLA
 Victoria Road
 Karachi

EXTRACTS

Victoria Road
 Karachi
 4 January 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

As regards the split in the League, you must have since read in the papers that Syed has completely broken off his relations with Jinnah's League and set up his candidates in various constituencies which number 11. All these, including Syed, have been expelled from the League. From my reports in Sind there are

chances of Syed's seven out of 11 being returned. Syed is certain. The League has nominated all 35 members. Jamiat-ul-Ulema and the Muslim Board which are controlled by Maulvi Mahomed Sadiq and Abdul Samad Khan of Baluchistan have set up 15 candidates, some of whom are independents. Maula Bux himself has not taken any ticket as he thinks as an Independent he has sure chances of success. About 8 are supported financially. Out of the 15 nominated by the Jamiat, the Muslim Board and Independents I think only six or seven are likely to be returned. If this figure turns out to be correct, then even we will have gained much. If we succeed in all the 20 general seats we are contesting, which I hope, and one (Nawabshah) which you have left open, both have declared to join the Congress if they are successful, then 21 with one labour added (22) seven from Muslims (Jamiat and Independents) would make 29; we will require two more to bury Pakistan in Sind. I am aiming at that.

Yours sincerely,
R. K. Sidhwa

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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8 January 1946

My dear Sidhwa,

I have your letter of the 4th inst. Pandit Jawaharlal's tour is to be finished today, and it is reported that at one or two important places of contest, the opponents of the Congress have withdrawn. It is good news. I trust that this tour will result in consolidating the Congress position and all the 22 Hindu seats will be captured without any difficulty. With the consolidation of our forces, the question of defeating the League will be much easier. The only thing that we should guard against is the possibility of disruption in the Congress ranks after the elections. This time there should be no disunity, no split, no quarrels. If we fail, we shall have to hang our heads in shame.

I propose to go to Ahmedabad on the 12th and from there to proceed to Delhi on or about the 17th. Please keep me informed of the situation there.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri R. K. Sidhwa
Karachi

CHAPTER VIII
ORIYA-ANDHRA PULLS

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Camp: Sambalpur
4 November 1945

Most Revered Sardarji,

I have the honour to submit herewith a true copy of my representation which was made in pursuance of a direction of [the Congress] President, [Abul Kalam] Azad to the secretary of the Utkal PCC. You may be kind enough to take note of the profaned name of Babu Prahlad Rai Lath so that his purse shall not be able to purchase the people of Utkal in order to bamboozle you with respect to the Congress ticket for the forthcoming provincial election. This Prahlad Raiji Lath is the very gentleman who had signed a document with the promise that he would join hands with the Parlakemidi Ministry at a time when we were all undergoing detention.

The name of another gentleman of Sambalpur deserved special mention in this connection. Babu Bodhram Dube, the ex-Minister of our province, had studiously refrained from supporting the August Resolution and as such he had freely and openly co-operated with the Government for the last three years or so. He had abstained from paying anything to the Kasturba Memorial Fund. But his zeal simply knew no bounds to preside over the Azfar Memorial Trust. This Azfar Memorial Trust was created in honour of the then reactionary District Magistrate of Sambalpur in the year 1944. Besides, Babu Bodhram Dube had joined a good many parties which were arranged in honour of officers of different categories. These gentlemen are in fact anti-Congress in their proclivities and actions but nevertheless they have been brisk at present with their ill-earned funds to organise batches of so-called Congressmen who are supposed to plead for them in the direction of having undue Congress tickets for the election. May you direct a colleague of yours to enquire into things of this district and I

make bold to say that you would order for a drastic overhaul of the Congress machinery of Utkal.

Fraternally yours,
Laxminarayan Mishra
Member, AICC

NB

I have got the bitterest need of seeing you once personally with the view to apprising you of things regarding Utkal in time so that you would well-nigh be able to prevent errors which might creep in owing to misinformation or want of information. I have been straining every nerve for the upkeep of the prestige of the Congress for the past twenty-five years and my ten glorious incarcerations and other sufferings must plead for my bona fides in this move. I may kindly be apprised of your future programmes so that it can be feasible for me to have a short interview with you at a convenient destination. I humbly pause for a reply.
L.N.M.

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Poona
16 November 1945

Dear Friend,

I have received a copy of the resolution passed by the Executive Council of the Utkal Association, Jamshedpur, sent by you. If the Association has such a low opinion of the leaders in the High Command of the Congress as is insinuated in the resolution of the Association, I have nothing to say. All I can say is that the members of the Association are not serving the cause of Utkal and are certainly trying to injure the cause of the Congress.

No one can say that Mr. Mahtab has not done anything for the province. If he is not an Oriya, as suggested in the resolution, he has certainly adopted it as his province for many years. What your object is in sending a copy of the resolution to me I have not been able to understand. The province has suffered a great deal through factions during the last four or five years and when the opportunity has come for uniting all sections of the people you have started this campaign which is calculated to injure it for years to come, for this is not the right way of educating the electorate.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hony. Secretary
The Utkal Association
Jamshedpur

8 January 1946

My dear Mahtab,

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter received from a man of the RAF serving in England and coming from your province. If you can find a place for him, it would be a feather in your cap to take such a man. It is for him to make arrangements for being a voter, which perhaps Government will allow and also give him facilities to return. In case you agree to take him, you may send me a wire so that I may reply by air mail. Your elections are in April, so there is plenty of time.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Harekrushna Mahtab
Cuttack

ENCLOSURE

Lal Ranjit Singh
50 Bishops Avenue
Bromley, Kent
England
31 December 1945

Sir,

As I am a stranger, I give you my introduction as briefly as possible and also state my reason for taking the privilege of writing to you personally. I am the fourth son of late Raja of Borasamber, Sambalpur, Orissa. I came to England in 1937 to study law and my study was interrupted by the war. After one year as an ambulance driver in London, in 1940 I joined the English Royal Air Force and after 5½ years of service I have just come out of the Air Force. During the war I married an English girl and I have a little daughter of 11 months.

The rest of the news you will get from my friends and relatives in India who will approach provincial and all-India Congress officials on my behalf.

If it is possible I would very much like to be adopted as a Congress candidate in my brother's estate, Borasamber, district Sambalpur, Orissa.

I remain,
Yours obediently,
Ranjit Singh

Vallabhbhai Patel
Congress Parliamentary Committee
Congress House
Bombay

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EXTRACT

Sambalpur
Orissa

18 January 1946

Esteemed Sir,

I have come to learn from the daily newspapers that Lal Ranjit Singh of Borasamber, who is at present an officer in the Royal Air Force, has applied for Congress nomination to the Orissa Provincial Legislative Assembly and that his name has been strongly recommended by the Central Parliamentary Board to the Provincial Parliamentary Board. There has also been a Press report to the effect that the provincial board has 'conceded' his claim provided he succeeds in getting his name enrolled as a voter in time. There is a talk here that the West Bargadh constituency in Sambalpur district has been reserved for him.

This decision of the Orissa provincial board has caused a sensation among Congress workers and sympathisers and provoked strong criticism from the critics of the Congress. Everybody is surprised to find an officer who has helped Britain to make the world safe for British imperialism, becoming a hot favourite of the Congress all of a sudden.

Your admirer & follower,
Shraddhakar Supakar

8 February 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of 18 January 1946. It is true that the provincial election board of Orissa has been directed by the Central Board to nominate Lal Ranjit Singh of Borasamber on the Congress ticket for the Provincial Assembly. This decision is the result of the Working Committee's policy decided at Calcutta, which is to take suitable men available from the Defence Forces' Indian personnel wherever it is possible to do so. It is true that men from the army having no traditions of the Congress may not fit in with the present atmosphere all at once, but there is no reason to suppose that they cannot rise to the occasion and fall in line with the Congress standard when they voluntarily apply for being enlisted as Congress soldiers. On the contrary, it is quite possible that having been trained in army discipline, they may prove better members of the Assembly than many of our Congress workers, who, in spite of their sacrifices in the Congress struggles, do not willingly accept discipline or abide by the decisions of the Congress in the working of the legislative programme. The intention of the Working Committee in laying down this policy is to create an impression in the Indian Defence Forces that in Free India they will not be treated as aliens or enemies but they will be given full opportunities to serve as patriots and prove their worth in the service of the country.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Shraddhakar Supakar
Sambalpur
Orissa

EXTRACT

P.O. Raj-Borasamber
Dist. Sambalpur
Orissa (B.N. Rly.)
18 February 1946

Dear Sir,

Please forgive me for taking this liberty of writing to you personally knowing you be a very busy man. But now I wish to express my humble and respectful gratitude for having accepted me as a Congress candidate from the West Bargadh General constituency of the district of Sambalpur. Your kind telegram did everything to procure me a priority of air passage to India. I left England early on the morning of 31 January last. This was my last day of war service and from the 1st instant my official demobilization from the Royal Air Force became effective.

Thanking you in anticipation,

I remain, sir,
Yours most obediently,
Ranjit Singh

22 February 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 18th instant. In fact I was thinking of writing to you since your return from England, about which I had learnt from the Press. I am not surprised about the state of mind in which you are, as you have returned after such a long time, in an entirely different atmosphere to which you were accustomed during all these years. I had received several letters from the province against your selection, particularly because the Congress policy during the period of war was to refuse to help the British Government in the war and you were actively engaged in the Defence Forces of H.M. Government. Besides you also happened to be a zamindar of the

province. In spite of this, we have selected you because our policy is to adopt suitable persons available in the Defence Forces for nomination in the Assemblies wherever possible.

For the present, I am certainly very busy and I am going to Lahore tomorrow, where I may be engaged for a few days. After that, I am going to Bardoli for a fortnight from the beginning of next month and therefore I will not be in Bombay till the third week of March. If you think it necessary to see me earlier you can do so at Bardoli after 3 March, but you are in the midst of elections and perhaps it would be wise to wait till your elections are over, but I leave it to you to decide. In the meanwhile, I would advise you to keep your eyes and ears open but at the same time to keep your mouth shut. Hear all, see everything but don't talk much. You have much to learn to adapt yourself to the environments and surroundings and also to the atmosphere of the country and particularly of the Congress. Sjt. Harekrushna Mahtab is for the time being your Leader, who will be able to guide you and you can trust him fully. He is a seasoned soldier and has made tremendous sacrifices for the country's cause. We have fought the country's battles without arms and you have done so with arms (but the battles of other countries) and you are now not to think of your arms or weapons. The conditions of our country and the ways and habits of our people must not make you impatient or angry. The country's lot is very hard. Our people deserve all the sympathy that we can give and all the services that we can render. No sacrifice is big enough for that purpose. Forget that you are a landlord; also try to forget that you are a superior person. Try to be one of the people of Orissa and learn to talk with them and live with them on their own level, if you want to serve them. Above all, first learn to talk to them in their own language, so that you can read their thoughts from their eyes and convey to them your ideas in their own language. Let not the people feel that you are arrogant or that you are a foreigner. Please give no grounds for complaint that the Congress made a wrong selection in choosing you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Kumar Lal Ranjit Singh
Orissa

Berhampore
Ganjam district
2 February 1946

My dear Sardarji,

I had intimated to you the results of by-elections in Orissa. Election of the executives of these boards are over and Congressmen have naturally come in. To initiate a uniform policy in all nation-building activities in these boards, it is proposed to have a provincial parliamentary committee of three members as a sub-committee of the PCC Working Committee. This committee will also look to the discipline of Congressmen in the District Board. I believe this will meet with your approval.

As for primary elections in the Scheduled Class constituencies in the province, four seats from the districts of Ganjam, Puri, Balasore and one seat in Cuttack district are uncontested. Severe contest is expected in the other seat in Cuttack district and also in Sambalpur district from Dr. Ambedkar's party being financed and helped by the party outside Orissa. There need however be no anxiety on this score. We were prepared for primary elections to prove that even in their community the rival candidates have little backing. It would have been a good lesson for Dr. Ambedkar but that was not attempted by them. Hence there is no primary election in this in Orissa.

Allow me to thank you much for the kind and soothing letter addressed to Sri B. Das. We are busy in Assembly elections and are anxious to give you a good account of the province for which you always have affection.

Hope this finds you, Maniben and the rest of the family in perfect health.

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
Biswanath Das

PS

We all owe you our debt of gratitude for having accepted Pani from Singbhum district as a Congress candidate.

B.D.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

6 February 1946

My dear Biswanath,

I have received your letter of the 2nd instant. I am glad the District Board elections in Orissa have been so successful. It is now for the provincial organisation to see that the overwhelming majority which has been secured in these elections do not result in discrediting the Congress but is utilised for the purpose of enhancing its reputation. A good committee should be appointed now to supervise the working of those bodies and to give guidance and directions for better administration of those local bodies. In many provinces Congressmen have proved their inability to rise above petty quarrels and considerations as well as over narrow selfish interests. In several places they have formed cliques for getting into offices and have brought a bad name in return. Please take necessary measures to see that the administration is carried out efficiently, cleanly and generally in the interests of the people concerned.

I am awaiting proposals for nominations from your province.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbbhai Patel

Sjt. Biswanath Das
Berhampore
Ganjam Dist.

Cuttack Central Jail
P.O. Cuttack
Orissa

6 February 1946

Respected Sardarji,

With my respectful pranams I lay before you the following case for your kind and impartial consideration.

I am a resident of Cuttack district in a most interior backward village. I am a Congress worker and a member of the PCC. I was a member of the Congress Party in the last Orissa

Assembly representing my home constituency. For taking an active part in the 1942 August movement I [was] convicted for five years' r. i. [rigorous imprisonment] in the famous conspiracy case of this province. I am now serving my term of imprisonment. Consequently I have lost my qualification for a seat in the Legislature.

The East Kendrapara constituency of Cuttack district from which I was returned consists of three police stations, or thanas, viz., Patkura, Mahakalpara and Rajnagar. Among these, my home thana, Patkura, is the biggest, having a population of 1½ lakhs, among whom there are more than 7,000 voters for the provincial legislature. The other two combined contain nearly 50,000 people with a voting strength of nearly 3,000. only. The whole area in this constituency suffers permanently from heavy flood in the rainy season, and from want of water for irrigation purposes and even for drinking in some places in the dry seasons. It abounds with jungles along with the coast of the Bay of Bengal, where it lies, and contains vast tracts of swampy and water-logged paddyfields without any communication for traffic. There are a network of big and small rivers throughout, that remain dry for eight months in the year. Recently a semi-famine due to heavy flood took a toll of hundreds of lives, and people of this area are still dying from malaria, cholera, small-pox and dysentery as its after-effects.

Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya visited this area last year and gave a lurid picture of the deplorable condition of the unfortunate people in her statement to the Press. But nobody took any interest in ameliorating the sufferings of the people. Hardly people have recovered from that shock when an India-wide famine is going to happen, as has been recently stated by the Central Government in the Assembly. So it is very urgent that a person living and moving among the people of the very locality should be chosen to remain in constant touch with the governmental machinery.

Sri D.B. Misra is a young man of a strong physique, a local Congress worker, suffered six months' r. i. and was fined Rs 25, and after the end of this imprisonment was detained as a security prisoner for nearly two years for taking an active part in the August movement. He possesses academic qualification up to matriculation and has much improved in his general knowledge that can be considered to be adequate for the Assembly's normal work. He is very popular in the constituency and as a resident

local worker is suitable in all respects to represent that constituency in the Assembly.

I rely upon your judgment and as a faithful soldier I must obey.

With due regards,

Faithfully yours,
Loknath Misra

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13 February 1946

Dear Mr. Misra,

I have received your letter of the 6th instant from Cuttack Central Jail, wherein you have been confined since a long time owing to your conviction and sentence for five years in the conspiracy case. I am sorry that we have not been able to secure your release and the release of other political prisoners but you may be sure that you are all constantly in our minds and it will not be long before the gates of jails are opened and you are once again restored to liberty in serving as comrade in the Congress cause.

You seem to be worried about the selection of a candidate from your district for the provincial Assembly. I have not yet received the proposals from Orissa but I expect them shortly and will try to see whether any injustice has been done to Sjt. D. B. Misra, about whom you are so particular. I may, however, inform you that the Assembly is not the only place of service nor is it comparatively a better place for service. You must be aware that many of us in the Congress Working Committee have never put our foot in any legislatures. Mahatma Gandhi has also never seen any Assembly hall. You must not attach any undue importance to these legislative bodies. Perhaps better work can be done from outside and Sjt. D.B. Misra, if he is such a sincere worker as you think him to be, is likely to lose his usefulness by being a member of the Assembly. I do not know why the Orissa provincial election board has recommended Sjt. B. C. Mohanty in preference to Sjt. D. B. Misra, but I dare say they must have some good reasons to do so. It is not proper for us to misjudge or attribute any motives of partiality or otherwise for their selection, which in all probability may be thoroughly honest.

It is not wise to worry about matters of this character from inside the walls. In jail nothing that goes on outside, over which

the prisoner has no control, should be allowed to disturb his mind. He must consider himself civilly dead and enjoy the peace of mind secured to him by his segregation from the outside world, which is full of worries and troubles these days. The best thing for you is to look after your health, to read in spare time good literature and pass your time mostly in spinning and meditation.

Wishing to see you outside soon,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbbhai Patel

Sjt. Loknath Misra
Political Prisoner
Cuttack Central Jail
P.O. Cuttack
Orissa

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EXTRACT

Berhampore
Ganjam district
16 March 1946

My dear Sardarji,

Of the Muslim seats, three are being contested but there is little chance except in one constituency. Barring also these three, there are only 50 seats including seats for Christians, Scheduled Castes, women, commerce and industries, backward tribes and labour. You can be assured of 48 seats as if they are in your pocket, including the 35 we now actually have, but there is a good possibility of our capturing 49 seats. My sorrow and anxiety is that we could not fully respond to your call showing cent per cent success. This is due not to us but due to the interference of Dr. Pattabhi. Among our possible losing a seat or two seats is the Andhra nominee for Berhampore (Ganjam district).

The position is now that the non-Congress Andhras are up against Dr. Pattabhi's nominee and Congress Andhras mostly are lukewarm. They have let loose communal feelings. People in general are deeply Congress minded and there is still a chance for the Congress candidate if some Andhra leaders like Prakasam or Dr. Pattabhi persuade the local Andhras not to support the non-Congress Andhra set up by them. . . .

Yours sincerely,
Biswanath Das

19 March 1946

My dear Biswanath,

I have received your letter of the 16th instant. You know Sjt. Mahtab was here last week. He told me that I will secure at least two Muslim seats, but from your letter it seems there is not much chance for any. However, there is no serious communal problem there and hence even if we do not get any Muslim seat, it would not create any difficulty.

On the whole, as 48 seats are assured, you have made a good beginning, unless last time's repetition of indiscipline at a later stage takes place. I hope there will be no such disloyalty this time.

I am writing to Dr. Pattabhi and also to Sjt. Prakasam about the Andhra nominee for Berhampore asking them to do something in the matter.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Biswanath Das
Berhampore
Ganjam district

New Delhi
18 April 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your telegram of the 17th inst. reading:

"ORISSA CHRISTIANS URGE INCLUSION OF CHRISTIAN MEMBER IN THE ORISSA CABINET."

The formation of a ministry rests with the leader of the Assembly Party of the Congress in Orissa. The elections are not yet over and the Leader is not elected, but I understand that Shri Harekrushna Mahtab will in all probability be elected

Leader. If you have to make any suggestion about the formation of the ministry, you should approach him, and if you can satisfy him about the necessity of including an Indian Christian he will certainly do so. It is not, however, possible to include members of all castes and creeds in the Cabinet in a small province like Orissa, and it is also unnecessary to rely upon such inclusion as the only means of serving the community. The Congress thinks in terms of nationalism and the Cabinet Members, though they may have been selected from any community, are expected to serve all the people of Orissa without any distinction.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Secretary
Utkal Indian Christian Association
Cuttack

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New Delhi
18 April 1946

My dear Mahtab,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a telegram received from the Utkal Indian Christian Association and a copy of my reply. [See 401]. I should like to know the final date on which your party meeting has been called for the election of Leader and the probable date on which you propose to form the ministry. Also give me full details of the composition of the proposed ministry.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
Cuttack

Cuttack
24 April 1946

Revered Sardarji,

I thank you for your letters of 'the 16th (marked confidential) and 18th inst. As regards your first letter, I shall take the necessary steps to get the maximum quota for Orissa from the Government of India Fund. With regard to your second letter, please refer to my express telegram dated 24 April, 1946, which reads as follows:

ASSUMED OFFICE YESTERDAY WITH FOUR OTHER MINISTERS, NABAKRISHNA CHOWDHURY, NITYANANDA KANUNGO, LINGARAJ MISRA, RADHAKRISHNA BEWASROY. EVERYTHING SMOOTH. MAHTAB.

I hope everything is going on happily in Delhi.
With my kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
H. Mahtab

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

Berhampore
Ganjam Dt.
(Orissa)
Camp Cuttack
21 April 1946

My dear Sardarji,

There was a meeting of the Orissa Assembly Congress Party yesterday at Cuttack. Fortysix out of 47 members attended the meeting. I presided over the meeting and Sri Harekrushna Mahtab was unanimously elected Leader. These newly-elected members also authorised him to select his colleagues and present the list to the Governor. The Governor is coming from Puri and Sri Mahtab meets him at 2 p.m. today. On the 23rd the Ministers take the oath of office and assume responsibilities. Thus I have

discharged my part of the work and free myself from the parliamentary work entrusted to me so long.

It would be unfair of me [if I did not] state how deeply obliged I am for all your kindness which I had the good fortune to receive all along. Let me assure you that this has deepened my attachment. Your efforts to remove disqualifications imposed on me are supreme and I glorify God for all this. The very fact that I have been able to win the confidence of a great disciplinarian like you sustains and warms me.

I had assured you of 48 out of 57 elected seats excluding the four Muslim and two seats of the zamindars. We have secured only 47. You will please remember that the selection of the Berhampore Andhra seat was that of Dr. Pattabhi against my opposition. A report will be submitted to you, with all facts, what disappointments were faced by us from the local Andhra public. Another report will give you the facts of our failure in the two other seats and specially the Labour seat (which is the only seat) captured by the Communists.

Hope this finds you in the best of health.

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
Biswanath Das

405

New Delhi
26 April 1946

My dear Biswanath,

I have received your letter of the 21st instant containing a report about the first Congress Assembly Party meeting and the election of the Leader. For the present this first chapter of the revival of parliamentary work in your province is over and it has been generally very satisfactory, for which you all deserve credit. You have done excellent work in obtaining such good results and I congratulate you for the same. Shri Mahtab replaces you for the time being and I am waiting for the day of your return to your rightful place, when your disqualification is removed. Till then we shall miss you very badly, but circumstances beyond our control have interfered with the fate of the province, which has been deprived of your leadership at this juncture. Except in the unfortunate province of Madras, in all other Congress provinces, except yours, the old premiers have been returned.

In Madras we tried our best to induce responsible people to accept Rajaji's leadership. They failed to accept our advice and have discredited the province and the Congress organisation in general. In Orissa things were different and but for the unfortunate obstacle which could not be removed, all would have welcomed your return.

Hope you are doing well. Please keep me informed of your activities.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Biswanath Das
Berhampore

406

Camp Calcutta
10 May 1946

My dear Sardarji,

I acknowledge with thanks your reply with expressions of sympathy and kindness which could hardly be forgotten. The Madras incident is to be deplored. It is an act of indiscipline which has not happened in the whole parliamentary career of the Congress, nor should it be repeated. Now that the provincial ministries have been functioning, it is necessary and desirable that the parliamentary sub-committee is constituted without delay. It is my experience and the experience of other Assembly Party leaders that no ministry and much less any parliamentary party could function efficiently without the help and guidance of the parliamentary sub-committee. Need I therefore stress that the sooner it is done the better for all concerned?

The announced resignation of the Governor-General's Executive Council revives the waning hopes of a possible settlement with Britain. I have already placed myself at your disposal. If you think that I am useful for the central executive, you may please utilise me there or in any manner you deem necessary. Shri Mahtab is now Premier. It is not at all my intention to disturb the arrangement only to show to the world that I am out for position and place. Let me fulfil your desire by helping the ministry in all possible manner from outside.

With pranams,

I remain,
Yours sincerely,
Biswanath Das

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Camp Chadwick
Simla, W
13 May 1946

My dear Biswanath,

I have received your letter of the 10th instant.

I agree with you that it would not be proper to disturb the arrangements that have been made at present. But it is possible that Shri Mahtab himself would like to have you back at your original place, as soon as possible. In the Central Government our position is yet uncertain. We must wait and see the picture as a whole that would evolve out of the present endeavours. However, one thing is certain that there will be many openings for the Congress and we have very few good, reliable men. So your services will be needed at any time.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Biswanath Das
Berhampore

CHAPTER IX
CP—SCRAMBLE FOR SEATS

408

C/o D.W. Mandpe
Dhantoli
Nagpur
21 November 1945

Dear Sardarji,

My application for the inclusion of my name in the electoral roll of the Provincial Assembly has been rejected: a report to this effect has already appeared in the Press. It has been held that a jail is no place of residence within the meaning of para (2) of Part VIII of Sixth Schedule to the Government of India Act, 1935. I am thinking of preferring an appeal against this decision, but local lawyers are of the opinion that it will not be of much avail unless the aforementioned schedule itself is amended by Parliament. What would you advise me in the matter?

I do hope that you are now restored to normal health and that the progress will be maintained, considering that we are now entering into the most salubrious season of the year.

In case you need my services on any front of our common battle, kindly let me know. I am ever ready.

I trust this will find you in good cheer.

Namaskar.

Yours sincerely,
H.V. Kamath

23 November 1945

My dear Kamath,

I have received your letter of the 21st inst. Only last week I had called Messrs. [R. S.] Shukla and [D. P.] Mishra¹ for consultation in pursuance of our conversation, but a couple of days after they left Poona, I saw the report in the Press that your application for entering your name in the electoral roll had been rejected. This is confirmed by your letter received today. It is a strange decision, but at present we have to put up with such idiotic and arbitrary orders. It means that for the present your going to the Assembly is out of the question. It does not, however, matter much so far as you are concerned. Perhaps you will be able to do better service from outside. Many of us have never gone to any of these legislatures. Your remaining out will perhaps suit your temperament also. I will write to you later about the work to be done by you, in case you decide to settle down in Mahakoshal province.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. H.V. Kamath
C/o Sjt. D.W. Mandpe
Dhantoli
Nagpur

Jubbulpore
20 December 1945

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I understand your letter addressed to me is waiting for me at Raipur. In the meanwhile, learning about Mishraji's illness, I reached Jubbulpore yesterday and saw your letter addressed to

¹ Joined freedom movement in early 1920s; MLA (Central), 1926; Opposition whip under Motilal Nehru; Home Minister, CP, 1937-39; member, CWC, 1950; VC of Saugar University, 1956-62; Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh, 1963-67; member, Central Parliamentary Board and Congress Working Committee, 1970-72

him from the train. Mr. Mishra is very grateful to you for your kind inquiries about his health. Since 1943, when he was in Vellore jail, he has been getting temperature practically every month. The real trouble could not be diagnosed at Nagpur. Now the expert here in the British Military Hospital says that the temperature is due to some infection in the kidney. It is hoped that the trouble will be known definitely in a day or two.

Even before Mr. Mishra got your letter we have been busy preparing our proposals for the Provincial Assembly. The last date for receiving applications from the candidates in the PCC office is 25 December. The district Congress committees have been asked to send their reports about the candidates by 4 January. The provincial board will meet on 6 January to make its own reports and recommendations. Our proposals will be in your hand latest by 10 January to enable you to accord your sanction by the middle of January.

As regards the Harijan seats we hope to capture all the eleven seats allotted to Mahakoshal. Mr. Hemchandra Khandekar has been persistently after us to give one of our seats to one Mr. Sakhare from Nagpur province in order to avoid the latter from opposing him in the city of Nagpur which also has a Harijan seat. Our Working Committee has rejected his request. As regards the Berar seats, Mr. Gavai and his group, the opponents of the Ambedkar party, are not willing to stand on the Congress ticket. He is not on good terms with [Brijlal] Biyaniji also. As regards Marathi CP Mr. Khandekar and his group are not willing to stand on the Congress ticket. Moreover, he is such an unscrupulous man that it is difficult to recommend him to anybody. My view is that in Marathi CP and Berar we should not interest ourselves in the primary elections of the Harijan candidates for the reason that a Congress candidate cannot win, defeating all the candidates set up by Dr. Ambedkar, Gavai and Khandekar groups. After the primary elections are over many will be found seeking Congress help and then we can select the best ones.

As regards the Muslim seats, our position is not desperate, as might be supposed; six seats lie in Berar, two in Marathi CP, five in Mahakoshal and the remaining one comprises two districts of Mahakoshal and one of Marathi CP. The Nationalist Muslims have formed a joint board for all the Congress provinces with headquarters at Nagpur. They are working on our instructions and in co-operation with us. We have asked the organisers

to seek the co-operation of Rankaji and Biyani. For the Mahakoshal seats we hope to set up two candidates on the Congress ticket and four on the Nationalist ticket. We are now, by a study of electoral rolls, trying to find out where we have the best chance. On these seats we wish to concentrate all our effort and money. We are trying to purchase an Urdu press for propaganda purposes.

You made inquiries on the phone about Mr. Ruiker. You already know my views about him. He is trying to strengthen his Forward Bloc by all sorts of means, throughout the provinces. His plans seem to be to have two seats for himself and his supporters in Marathi CP on the plea that he cannot stand on the Congress ticket from the Nagpur Labour seat. He wants to get a general seat, preferably the Nagpur city seat. I am afraid Mr. Ruiker has more up his sleeves than we have been able to discover so far. He is in touch with Dr. [N.B.] Khare¹ and is a great friend of Mr. Hemchandra Khandekar.

In the course of my recent visit to Nagpur I was informed by Mr. Ananta Sheorey of Independent [now Managing Editor, Nagpur Times] that under the guidance of Shri Vinoba Bhave² and Jajuji, it was being earnestly proposed to send some Ashramites to the Provincial Assembly. Shri Dharmadhikari for the Nagpur City, Shri Shriman Narayan Agarwal for the Wardha-Chanda urban seat and Shri Gopal Rao Kale for the Arvi seat, are considered to be some of the candidates. Mr. Dharmadhikari is said to be trying to bring back some supporters of Dr. Khare. Mr. Sheorey who gave this information himself favours the idea and was pleading for our co-operation. He said that the Ashramites feel that to push through Gandhiji's schemes it was essential for some Ashramites to be in the Assembly. You already know my views regarding these matters and I must not repeat them. Apart from Shri Jajuji and Shriman Narayan the whole idea is to retrieve the Maharashtrian fortunes lost in 1938 as a result of Dr. Khare's conduct. It is also being attempted to bring in as many Maharashtrian candidates as is possible. So we are back to the 1936 position when the same game was being played! Much store is also being set by the visits of Shri Shankarrao Deo, who, they say gleefully, has been appointed Zonal Dictator by the Maharashtrian Berar and Nagpur province!

¹ Deposed Premier of CP; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council; once suspected of sympathy with RSS which was temporarily banned after assassination of Gandhi

² A leading Gandhian who pioneered bhoodan (land gift) movement

Before I conclude I wish to say a word about a candidate from Bombay province. He is Mr. Devjibhai of the firm of Heerji Govindji who has applied for the Bombay commerce seat. As against his opponent, Mr. Ramnath Poddar, Mr. Devjibhai actually participated in the 1942 movement and was imprisoned. I am interested in him inasmuch as his firms both at Nagpur and Jubbulpore have always helped the Congress. More than this I cannot say as I have no knowledge of the situation in the Bombay city.

I am leaving Jubbulpore today for Lucknow and will be returning to Jubbulpore by the 25th and Raipur 27th.

Yours sincerely,
R.S. Shukla

411

24 December 1945

My dear Ravishankar,

I have received your letter of the 20th instant. Please write to me as soon as possible about the diagnosis in the Military Hospital of Mishraji's ailment.

If we get your proposals before 10 January, it will be all right for our purpose.

Your committee did well in rejecting Khandekar's proposal to accommodate him by giving one seat to Sakhare of Nagpur province. Khandekar appears to me to be an undesirable person. I agree with you that we should not meddle with the primary elections by putting up our candidates on the Congress ticket at this stage in Berar and Nagpur.

If you can succeed in securing even one or two seats on the Congress ticket in the Muslim constituencies, it would be very good. About the independent Muslims contesting the League candidates, I do not feel much interested.

Mr. Ruiker may have his own way if the local Congress organisation is not strong enough, and probably it is so. However, I will inquire from Mr. Ruiker if he has any objection to stand on the Congress ticket from the labour constituency instead of doing so as an independent one. His touch with Dr. Khare would do him no good and would perhaps do him harm if it is known to the people,

I know that efforts are being made to bring in Dada Dharmadhikari in the Assembly but I do not believe that he is in favour of any of Dr. Khare's old supporters. There is no doubt that Dada Dharmadhikari is held in high esteem for his honesty, integrity and even abilities and therefore they want to fill in the gap of leadership in Nagpur province for which there is great need. Amongst the Ashramites there is none who is willing to come in the Assembly except Mr. Shriman Narayan. Sri Jajuji's coming in is out of the question. He will not come even if he is pressed.

The idea of a zonal committee is all nonsense. It is a case of wishful thinking.

About Mr. Devjibhai, nothing can be said at present except that he is one of a dozen candidates from the Chamber, who propose to contest, and the decision will largely depend upon the recommendations of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, which will be guided by the influence of the candidate in the Chamber. Devjibhai is the most junior member amongst all the candidates in the Chamber and therefore he has the least influence. He is no doubt a Congressman, probably on the provincial Congress committee also, but I am not in a position to say anything at present.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbbhai Patel

Shri Ravishankar Shukla
Raipur, CP

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EXTRACTS

Rajasthan Bhavan
Akola
20 December 1945

Respected Sardarji,

The Provincial Congress Committee met on the 16th and a Parliamentary Board has been appointed. The rules in connection with the election have also been framed. All decisions were unanimous. The last date for receiving applications is fixed for 6 January 1946. We could not fix earlier as the final date for hearing the claims and objections is 4 January 1946. I propose holding the meeting of the Provincial Parliamentary Board on

the 8th. All the recommendations will reach you by the 10th or 11th in time before 15 January.

The question of Scheduled Caste candidates is receiving my keen attention. Their primary election may come in the next month. I hope to contest and win all the four seats for this province in the final election. The followers of Ambedkar are numerous no doubt but I am sure of success and shall leave no stone unturned in this connection.

The question of Muslim constituencies is more difficult. There are six seats from this province out of 14 for the whole of CP & Berar. The Muslim population is numerous, rich and more organised in Berar. The League has a greater hold in this area owing to various reasons. The powerful workers of the League are from Berar. Under all these different circumstances, I am trying my level best and hope to set up some candidates against League nominees. I may even get some to stand on the Congress tickets or as Nationalist Muslims.

The question of general constituencies is not very difficult. I hope to win all the seats provided the situation is properly handled.

With deepest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Brijlal Biyani

413

25 December 1945

My dear Brijlal,

I have received your letter of the 20th instant. It is difficult for me to visit Akola at present as I am not in a fit state of health for the strain of journey.

I am glad to hear that your decisions in connection with the election have all been unanimous. The question of Scheduled Castes candidates in your province and in Nagpur requires careful consideration. The Mahar community is largely to be found in these areas and hence we must particularly [take] care to see that no one of the followers of Dr. Ambedkar succeeds. The final elections will take place first and you may not, if you so desire, interfere with it except putting one of your own men without giving a ticket; he can be adopted on our ticket after he succeeds in the election.

The non-Muslim General constituencies will be won without difficulty all over, but the Muslim constituencies are difficult and perhaps we may not succeed in getting a single seat. However, we will discuss that question when you come here.

As you are engaged till the 31st, you may come as soon as you are free, say, on 1 or 2 January. It is possible that I may have to go to Ahmedabad after the 3rd and so you must not delay your coming here.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sri Brijlal Biyani
President,
Vidarbha Provincial Congress Committee
Akola

414

Seoni (CP)
21 December 1945

From
The General Secretary
The Azad Muslim Parliamentary Board
CP & Berar

My respected Sardar,
Jai-Hind

The Central Muslim (Nationalist) Parliamentary Board had authorised me to form a provincial board in CP & Berar, and I am glad to inform you that the said board was formed in Nagpur on the 9th inst. Maulvi Chiaghuddin, ex-vice-president, Mahakoshal PCC, was elected as president of the board and myself as secretary. The board in its meeting of the 17th inst. decided to support the Muslim candidates to be set up by the Congress in this province and the board will set up candidates on its own ticket in the remaining constituencies of the province. In Berar, it does not seem possible to set up candidates on the Congress or Azad Muslim Board ticket, and if even after further efforts the position is not changed we will have to support such independent candidates who openly declare that they are against Pakistan and the two-nation theory of the League. . . .

Yours faithfully,
M. Maqbul Ahmed

30 December 1945

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter dated 21st inst.

I gather from your letter that you want to see me personally in connection with the selection of candidates for the Muslim constituencies in the province of CP. If you desire to do so, you can come to Bombay in the first week of January and intimate to me the date of your coming before doing so. I trust you have acquainted Sjt. Ravishankar Shukla with your proposals. Much will depend on the recommendations received from the provincial Congress committee concerned.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

M. Maqbul Ahmed, Esq.
Secretary
Azad Muslim Parliamentary Board
CP & Berar
Seoni
CP

416

EXTRACTS

Walker Road
Nagpur City
24 December 1945

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Central Election Board
Congress House
Bombay

Dear Sardarji,

The resolutions passed by the Nagpur Textile Union are intended to enable the labour representatives to co-operate with the Indian National Congress and to defeat the game of other communalists in the labour movement who may perhaps try to

disrupt the ranks of the working class. At Nagpur itself the situation is very much complicated owing to a strong party working under the guidance of Dr. Ambedkar and if you really want to capture all the four seats at Nagpur, i.e. Nagpur-cum-Kamptee, the Trade Union constituency seat, the Scheduled Caste seat and the Women seat, then we have to proceed very cautiously and carefully, otherwise there is every danger that we may lose one of the seats at any rate. I can assure you that if our viewpoint is taken into consideration by you and the board, in making the final selections of the various candidates for the four seats at Nagpur, then I am confident that all the four seats in Nagpur can be won by the Congress. I have absolutely no objection if the representative selected by our trade union stands on the Congress ticket; on the other hand it will be my endeavour to see that whosoever is elected finally by the trade union to contest the labour constituency, he should sign the Congress creed and ultimately fight the elections on the Congress-cum-labour ticket. It may be necessary to grant certain freedom of action to the trade union representatives so far as purely economic matters relating to day-to-day trade union work are concerned; on all other questions the working class representatives should wholly fall in line with the Congress. I do not for a moment want that the Congress should disown its representative character so far as labour is concerned. On the other hand I want the entire Congress to be a labour organisation that is the goal of the August Resolution and I stand by it. But as pointed out above, the problem of the labour seat in Nagpur is not one which can be dissociated from the other seats at Nagpur, as an overwhelming majority of the working class in Nagpur has got also a vote in the General constituency as well as the Scheduled Caste constituency. The reason why the Union has passed such a resolution to which you have referred in your letter is that I am not the only person who has got the final word in deciding all these matters, though it is correct that I am the president of the Nagpur Textile Union. The resolution represents the views also of those who are somewhat shy of completely falling in line with the Congress but it is a distinct victory for those like me in the trade union who want the Congress and labour to fall in line and who also want that all elections at Nagpur should be fought on the Congress ticket. If the situation at Nagpur is managed tactfully, taking into consideration the feelings of the Nagpur working class and the general public and the rank and file of the Congress, I am confident that the Congress will be able to

capture all the four seats at Nagpur including the Trade Union constituency, the Scheduled Caste, the Nagpur-cum-Kamptee General seat and the Women seat.

I am
Yours truly,
R. S. Ruiker

417

27 December 1945

My dear Ruiker,

I have received your letter of the 24th inst.

Regarding the Textile Union constituency, I have seen your viewpoint. It would be better if you could discuss this matter with Sri Shankarrao Deo who happens to be there from today for a few days. If you cannot persuade the Textile Labour Union to go whole hog with the Congress, the next best alternative will have to be considered. In any event, we must not allow any seat to go out of the Congress or to any anti-Congress candidates.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

R.S. Ruiker, Esq.
President, Nagpur Textile Union
Walker Road
Nagpur

418

30 December 1945

Dear Captain Paranjpe,

I received your letter dated the 1st inst. at Calcutta. You must have received my telegram regarding the policy of admitting suitable army officers in the Assembly election. Before I could write to you further I received your letter of the 18th inst. It would appear from your letter that even if you are immediately selected as a Congress candidate for the Legislative Assembly election, you will remain as an army officer for 80 days after the date of release. The earliest your nomination can be sanctioned would be on 15 January when the Central Election Board meets at Delhi and 80 days thereafter would take the period toward the

end of March next. In this connection I have to point out to you that under Sec. 69 (1) (a) a person is disqualified for being chosen as and for being a member of the Provincial Legislative Assembly if he holds any office of profit under the Crown in India and I feel that as long as your name remains on the pay list you will be deemed to be in the service of the Crown in India. Even if you are released immediately, the 80 days thereafter will be about 10 March. Your nomination must be filed by the end of January or the beginning of February, though no dates are officially announced by the Central Provinces Government. I do not see therefore how you can stand as a Congress candidate in the forthcoming election. If a way can be found out of this legal difficulty, I would ask the provincial Congress committee to consider your case favourably and carefully and even the Central Election Board may deal with your case as an exceptional one. As the matter stands, however, I do not think it will be possible to put you up as a Congress candidate. I regret that I have to come to this conclusion but it seems that the law is otherwise and even the recent Act passed by Parliament is of no help to you in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Capt. K.B. Paranjpe
C/o RTO, Railway Quarters
Poona

419

Madan Mahal Extension
Jubbulpore
3 January 1946

Revered Sardar Sahib,

I am extremely sorry I could not answer your kind letter earlier owing to prolonged illness. With your ashirvad [blessings] I am now free from fever. If I do not get another attack I hope to gain strength gradually. . . .

Reports and recommendations about various candidates have reached us practically from all the districts. The Provincial Election Board will complete its job by the 7th and you will have our proposals by the 10th instant.

We are likely to face some difficult problems.

In conclusion I want to assure you that I have no intention of being called for consultation at the time of final selection. Shuklaji has my complete confidence. I have sense enough to know that you want me to co-operate with him in the interest of the province. It is a matter of pleasure for me to carry out your wishes in this respect. All my suspicions of 1926 disappeared when I worked with him from 1937 to 1939. He is now in the evening of his life and I would rather suffer in silence than cause him any pain.

On receiving the report that you were going to Calcutta by train Seth Govind Das went to see you at the Jubbulpore station but it was subsequently learnt that you flew to Calcutta. When you returned he had gone out of station. He is anxious to meet you. You will be pleased to learn that all misunderstandings caused by interested people have now been cleared up and he has promised to co-operate with Shuklaji as well as with me. I look upon this as an achievement as disgruntled people would have gathered round him and caused disunity in the province.

Yours respectfully,
D. P. Mishra

420

7 January 1946

My dear Mishraji,

I have received your letter of the 3rd instant. As in many provinces, provincial Congress committees being in charge of all people who are not in tune with the current of the present temper and atmosphere in the country, difficulties are experienced in the matter of selection of candidates. Your province is also one of them. I am therefore not surprised to hear that you will not find the matter so smooth and simple. However, you need not worry about it. Everything will be adjusted in accordance with the requirements of the situation and keeping in view the interest of the province as a whole. I am extremely glad to hear that the mental curtain between you and Seth Govind Das has been removed and you have become of one mind as before. Life-long friendship should not be allowed to be disturbed by suspicion and distrust. Such things can be removed by frankness and mutual desire to come together and also to remain together. I trust that there will be no further misunderstanding. I did not

know that Seth Govind Das wanted to see me. Perhaps if I had known, I would have called him.

You need not come to Delhi when the proposal for selections will be considered, but we shall call the president of the provincial Congress committee and Shuklaji. That I think will be enough.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Dwarka Prasad Mishra
Madan Mahal Extension
Jubbulpore

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TELEGRAM

Raipur
7 January 1946

Sardar Patel
Bombay

FOURTEEN OUT OF FIFTEEN MEMBERS MAHAKOSHAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD APPLIED. HENCE REQUEST IMPARTIAL JUDGMENT.

KANHAIYALAL LUNIA

422

8 January 1946

The Secretary,
Mahakoshal Provincial Congress Committee
Raipur

Dear Friend,

I am quoting below copy of a telegram which has been received in this office:

"FOURTEEN OUT OF FIFTEEN MEMBERS MAHAKOSHAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD APPLIED. HENCE REQUEST IMPARTIAL JUDGMENT."

If the facts mentioned in the telegram are true, I would advise you to set matters right and appoint a small board of which members are not themselves seeking tickets for nomination. The complaint appears to be legitimate and it cannot be ignored. It would be unwise to shut your ears to such a legitimate complaint.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

423

TELEGRAM

Yeotmal

10 January 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

WIRE BERAR CONGRESS CANDIDATE SELECTION DATE WHETHER
REPRESENTATION IN PERSON ALLOWED BEFORE BOARD.

DESHPANDE PLEADER

424

TELEGRAM

68 Marine Drive
Bombay
11 January 1946

Deshpande
Yeotmal

PERSONAL REPRESENTATION ALLOWED BUT CONSIDERED UNDESIRABLE.

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

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EXTRACTS

Jubbulpore
14 January 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Thakur Chedi Lal, owing to his indolent disposition and easy-going habits, took no interest in the day-to-day political life of this province and allowed it to be mishandled by self-seekers. A man like Amar Singh Saigal possessing no reputation for moral integrity was drafted into the Provincial Working Committee. Raghunath Sinha Kiledar, who had no Congress activity to his credit and had joined the Congress for the first time after its ministry had been installed in the province,

was appointed general secretary in disregard of the claims of veteran Congressmen. His unpopularity in his own district will be obvious from the fact that his candidature for the Narsinghpur-Gadarwara seat has been by an overwhelming majority rejected by the executive of the DCC, which was consulted like the rest of the district executives in respect of the candidates coming from them. Kashi Prasad Pande, a thoroughgoing opportunist, who always stepped into a legislative chamber in the teeth of the bans imposed by the Congress from time to time and who left no stone unturned to sneak into any cabinet by whomsoever formed, was appointed on the Working Committee of the province. This gentleman, in order to get a recommendation of his present candidature from his own district executive, was constrained to enter into a pact with Syt. Bhawani Prasad Tiwari, president of the Jubbulpore Nagar Congress Committee, to throw overboard a reputed and respected Congressman like Pandit Kunjlal Dube, who has sought the Congress ticket for the seat of Jubbulpore city. Even Syt. Pande's best friend, Thakur Chedi Lal, who, in pursuance of the procedure laid down by the provincial election board, was appointed to supervise the proceedings of this executive committee, was compelled to report that the members "appeared to me to be fully canvassed and already determined to record their votes. The whole atmosphere was unreal and to me the results of the deliberations appeared to be more or less mechanical." (The quotation is from Thakur Chedi Lal's report Flag C in File No. 29.)

Yours very sincerely,
D.K. Mehta

426

29 January 1946

My dear Mehta,

I had received your letter of the 14th at Delli. In a democratic organisation, all sorts of people get in and it is difficult to prevent all people from getting into power. However, in the matter of selection of candidates, the proposals that were brought forward by Thakur Chedi Lal were scrutinised and eventually all the proposals that were agreed upon have been accepted by Shuklaji. For the present, therefore, no blame can be attached to Thakur Chedi Lal and in future if there is any difficulty you

can write to me so that steps can be taken to remedy the wrong, if any.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. D.K. Mehta
Jubbulpore

427 ,

TELEGRAM

Jubbulpore
28 January 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

GREAT DISSATISFACTION RESENTMENT ON SELECTION JUBBULPORE DISTRICT CANDIDATES. DISTRICT TOWN CONGRESS UNANIMOUS RECOMMENDATIONS COMPLETELY IGNORED. PRAY RECONSIDERATION. DEPUTATION WISH REPRESENT PERSONALLY. KINDLY WIRE DATE.

SECRETARY, TOWN CONGRESS

428

TELEGRAM

29 January 1946

Secretary
Town Congress
Jubbulpore

BOARDS DECISION FINAL. NO APPEAL POSSIBLE.

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

429

6 February 1946

Dear Mr. Kedar,

I have received your letter of the 30th ult. today as I was away from headquarters.

I am glad you appreciate the final selections made by us from Mahakoshal. I have noted that you are critical about the selections from Berar, but you will agree that we cannot improve

upon the material because when making selections we have no choice but to confine ourselves to the provincial recommendations. In Berar perhaps the general standard may not come up to expectations because men of parliamentary experience may not be available for selection.

I have received no proposals from Nagpur as yet. Your ability as a good parliamentarian is undisputed. Your ability as a good lawyer cannot perhaps be surpassed or equalled in Nagpur, but your selection as a Congress candidate may be questioned by many because of your differences with Congress policy and programme and of your inability to fit in with the Congress atmosphere. In the past you have found it difficult to accept Congress discipline and therefore it is possible that the local provincial committee may not recommend your nomination. It would, therefore, be difficult for the Centre to interfere.

Those who support Government have often found by experience that in the end they are thrown away when its purpose is served and therefore Congressmen have made it a rule never to be instruments of this Government, under any circumstances. If you had followed that rule faithfully, you would not have come in disfavour of the Government as you now find yourself to be. However, I congratulate you for your acting according to your convictions, in spite of your incurring the displeasure of the Government in the matter of the opening of the Commerce College.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. T.J. Kedar
Advocate
Nagpur

430

EXTRACT FROM T. J. KEDAR'S LETTER TO SARDAR PATEL
DATED 8 FEBRUARY 1946

. . . But I think you will permit me to differ from you when you say that I became an instrument of Government. If you refer to my election as Vice-Chancellor, I took that position because the Congress Ministry itself put me in that position. In the CP, Vice-Chancellors are elected and not nominated. Once the election takes place, the person elected is bound to be accepted as Vice-Chancellor in the same way as ministers chosen by the

majority party are accepted by Government as ministers. The Congress was not in office at the time of the second election. Still Government could not do much at the time as my popularity was very high on account of the stand I had taken in admitting 600 Hindu students of Hyderabad University who had been expelled for singing Bande Mataram. No other university, not even the Benaras Hindu University gave them an asylum. The Government did not like it but they could not do anything. On the third occasion the political issue involved in the opening of the Commerce College made it possible for the Government to induce some of my supporters to go over to the opposite camp.

If I had been an instrument of Government I alone of all Vice-Chancellors would not have remained un-knighted.

All the same I realise your difficulties. I shall most cheerfully bow to any decision that may be arrived at.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
T.J. Kedar

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

431

11 February 1946

Dear Mr. Kedar,

I have received your letter of the 8th inst.

I am thankful for your correcting my wrong impression about your becoming an instrument of Government in your being a Vice-Chancellor, which I thought was an office in the gift of Government. I am also glad that you appreciate my difficulties in the matter of selection of candidates and I congratulate you for your readiness to willing acceptance of our decision in the Central Board.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. T.J. Kedar
Nagpur

22 February 1946

Dear Mr. Kedar,

Thanks for your telegram of yesterday. Rankaji had assured me that he will accept our decision whatever it may be after his having received a letter from Mahatmaji, but evidently his colleagues are greatly dissatisfied and therefore he has also changed his stand. He now complains of humiliation but if it was so why did he give me that assurance when he was here? Anyway, there is no question of any humiliation in this matter, as the final selections were to be made by the Central Board. No proper recommendations were made from the province at all. The board of 15 in the province abdicated its powers and delegated the same to six, and these six in their turn delegated the delegated powers to Rankaji and practically there were no recommendations from the province. However, where there are more applications and few seats, there is bound to be such discontentment, especially where the applicants are not accustomed to accept decisions loyally.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. T. J. Kedar
Nagpur

Jubbulpore
7 February 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

As I have already told you on the phone, I have requested Mishraji to see you at Bombay. Although he is not quite well, I am sure he will meet you in a couple of days and explain the situation.

The announcement of candidates has met with universal approval here except among some of the rejected candidates. It is they who are engineering agitation. Before they started their agitation I was sure 50 per cent of the seats would go

uncontested and our candidates returned unopposed. Their airing of dissatisfaction publicly is encouraging the opponents of the Congress to offer opposition to our candidates. Of course this opposition in most of the constituencies will be only technical, and feeble too, but all the same it will force us to make all the arrangements an election involves. It would be in the best interest of the province if the regular candidates are firmly told that after the list had been finally approved the all-India Board could not hear appeals against its own decision. But unfortunately what has happened in the province of UP is encouraging the mischief-mongers in this province. I met Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant at Lucknow. I found him rather sad as Maulana Sahib [Azad] has replaced some of the candidates even after their names had been published by the all-India Board. While this sort of action may be merely unfortunate in a province like UP, it is sure to prove disastrous in a composite province like ours.

Yours sincerely,
R. Shukla

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

434

8 February 1946

My dear Ravishankar,

I have received your letter of the 7th inst. I have already written to you that no changes will be made in the decisions that have been taken and therefore no appeals will be entertained on the nominations published.

Poonamchand is coming tomorrow with the Nagpur proposals. I will see what [D.P.] Mishraji has to say in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Ravishankar Shukla
Raipur

11 February 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 8th inst. giving all the information re: the discharge of your son, Capt. Paranjpe, and also about his whereabouts. I am glad you have given us the necessary information and there will be no difficulty about his selection as a Congress candidate from Nagpur province.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. D. V. Paranjpe
Dharampeth
Nagpur

Raipur
12 February 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

On return here today from Nagpur I received your two letters dated the 6th and 8th inst. Thanks many. We are now going ahead with full force making arrangements for nominations.

I met Poonamchandji at Nagpur and discussed with him the proposals for joint constituencies. University of course goes to Dr. Hasan and the commerce seat will go, I feel, to Mulla Abdul-labhai. He can succeed only if you kindly ask Biyani to see that Singhi (Munim of Seth Gopal Das Mehta) and Seth Gopal Das help Mullaji. Seth Gopal Das intended to stand from this constituency and had therefore got about 400 to 500 voters registered. We must now see that these voters vote for Mullaji. If this is done Mullaji's chances are then almost certain.

As regards the landholders constituency, after discussion with me Rankaji agreed to the selection of Mrityanjaya Prasad. He was no doubt hesitating and had, it appeared, a soft corner for Bhonsle and I believe he might have told you that Mrityanjaya Prasad's success was doubtful. I think he is not right. Knowing

the voters as I do, I feel that we can win this seat for the Congress. Our Bhujangrao Rao from Chanda district is also standing. If there is a triangular contest, our Congress candidate is sure to succeed. If there is only Bhonsle or Bhujangrao we may have to work hard for our candidate. There is no doubt that a good deal of sentiment is behind Bhonsle. You may consider all these facts and decide whether we should leave this seat uncontested.

As regards the town seat of Nagpur, I find that there is a strong feeling throughout the town that a resident of the town should be adopted. Avari is a very strong candidate for the town. I know there is a good deal of prejudice against him and he is reputed to be pig-headed. But the Avari of 1946 is not the Avari of 1940. He has changed a good deal and is very much sobered down. He will be, I can assure you, very loyal to us and will do nothing to merit censure from you. He has suffered the most and I feel his selection will be most welcome in the town. I feel almost certain he will be returned unopposed. If he cannot be given the city seat I would request you to give him a rural seat. Two days ago I had a talk with Ganpatrao Pande. He told me that if any candidate who is not a resident of Bhandara district is selected he will withdraw. Therefore, if in the place of Makae Guruji Avari is put up Pandeji may retire. Pande is a powerful candidate and it would be difficult to unseat him. Even if this proposal is not accepted I shall indeed be very happy if Avari is given some other constituency. If Dada Dharmadhikari is adopted from the city of Nagpur he will be severely opposed. Great effort will have to be made to bring him. The Arvi seat, I learn, will be hotly contested if any other person except a non-Brahmin is adopted. Wagh will perhaps be most suitable. Of course you have almost all interested persons present in Bombay. All can safely rely on your judgment. You will get this by the 15th noon. If there is anything which you wish to ask me I shall be available at Phone No. 154.

With best wishes,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
R. Shukla

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

16 February 1946

My dear Ravishankar,

I have received your letter of the 12th inst. Nothing can be done now regarding Avari. The consideration of proposals from Nagpur has reached a final stage and nothing can be done to change the conclusions. Your letter was too late.

Mishraji had come here and I discussed the matter fully with him and the Nagpur friends, including Kishorelalji. He will explain to you everything.

Thakur Chedi Lal has come here. He is not indifferent about the little discontentment or agitation that has been going on in Mahakoshal about some of the selections. He defends the Central Board's sanction in toto, and has not said a word against it. He came here only for the purpose of obtaining sanction for the substitute of the Harijan candidate, who turned traitor.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Ravishankar Shukla
Raipur

EXTRACT FROM SHRI MAHESH DUTT MISHRA'S LETTER TO
SARDAR PATEL DATED 12-2-46

The workers of the Harda-Seoni constituency are independent minded but are known throughout the province for scrupulousness, sacrifice and sincere work. It is due to them that there is unity in the district despite the efforts of a few opportunist elements. When such workers decided upon the name of Pandit C.G. Mishra (father) it was after a great heart-searching discussion on principles. Although the support was spontaneous, the workers discussed all aspects of supporting a non-jail-goer candidate. The support is unanimous and what looks due to there being four applications is only due to the confusion in the province. If we were given a chance to prove we would have collected signatures from all Congressmen and even voters of the constituency.

But since we know that Shuklaji was aware of it we assert this again that Pandit C.G. Mishra was supported by all the workers of the constituency. Moreover it was due to him only that the workers agreed on one application being sent. I myself tried them to be unanimous on some other name but failed. So this was one of the temptations that led me to support his candidature. Now by imposing an outsider, whatever sacrifice may be to his credit was a grave injustice to the constituency and the workers who had to suffer.

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21 February 1946

My dear Mahesh,

I have received your letter of the 12th inst. You need to have much stronger nerves than you seem to possess if you want to serve your country. The Assembly is not the only place for service and you should not have taken the matter of rejection of your father's nomination so seriously. There is nothing unusual in such matters and there is no need to attribute any motives to anybody or to find out reasons other than those which are apparent for the decision that has been taken. You must learn to be tolerant to others and you must also learn to take such minor defeats sportingly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Mahesh Dutt Mishra
9 Hamilton Road
Allahabad

440

Raipur
22 February 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Notwithstanding the assurances contained in your letters of the 6th, 8th and 16th I am informed by [D.P.] Mishraji on the phone that Maulana Sahib has allowed K. P. Pande, an arch-intriguer to enter the Assembly. I also learn that some change is being made even at this stage (after nominations) in the

Dhamtari constituency of this district. God only knows what is in store for us in this unfortunate province.

Yours sincerely,
R. Shukla

PS.

In case of necessity you may kindly phone me at N. 49 or 77.

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TELEGRAM

Karachi
14 February 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Congress House
Bombay

YOUR CABLE. SECURED AIR PASSAGE AND LANDED TODAY. IMMENSELY GRATEFUL. MEETING YOU AFTER FILING NOMINATION.

KALAPPA

442

14 February 1946

My dear Kalappa,

I have received your wire from Karachi and I am glad you have returned. Your nomination in the labour constituency in Mahakoshal has created an amount of trouble, as there are other claimants who complain that you are not doing any service in this constituency, and therefore you have no right to be its representative. We have rejected all these appeals but you must bear in mind that in these days of democracy, if you will not keep in touch with your constituency, the voters will certainly have a genuine grievance and you will put the Congress organisation in the wrong. I have just brought this fact to your notice in order that you may fully discharge your duty towards your voters.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. V.R. Kalappa
44 King's Way
Nagpur

Rajasthan Bhawan
Akola
14 February 1946

The Secretary,
Central Election Board
Congress House
Bombay

Dear Friend,

Your letter of 9 February 1946. I know the disqualification that is against Mr. G.B. Thakre. An application has been made for the removal of the disqualification and I hope the disqualification will be removed in time. In case it is not removed an alternative name will be kept ready. I shall inform you the alternative name.

Yours sincerely,
G. R. Kulkarni
Secretary

17 February 1946

My dear Biyani,

I received your letter of the 14th inst. today. We waited for the alternative name, but your letter, instead of giving us the name, informs us that the name will be kept ready. That is not proper. The substitute's name should be sanctioned by the Central Board. We have received complaints about this matter and your reluctance to give the name lends colour to the complaint. We have sent you a telegram today as under:

"YOUR LETTER. IF THAKRE'S DISQUALIFICATION NOT REMOVED CENTRAL BOARD SANCTIONS DOCTOR SONAR."

If Sjt. Thakre's disqualification is not removed, Dr. Sonar's nomination is to be filed. Please inform him accordingly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbbhai Patel

Sjt. Brijlal Biyani
Rajasthan Bhawan
Akola

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Rajasthan Bhawan
Akola
20 February 1946

Respected Sardarji,

I have received your letter of the 17th in connection with the case of Shri Thakre. It has pained me a little as I find there is some misunderstanding. Let me assure you at the outset that there was never the slightest desire or the remotest thought to evade the authority of the Central Board. I have disinterestedly carried out all your orders and shall unhesitatingly do so in future. Please allow me to offer a little explanation.

Your letter of the 9th was received by me on the 14th. Before this an application was made for the removal of the disqualification and I was expecting an early decision. On receipt of your letter of the 9th. I could not give you the substitute name immediately as I wanted to consult. I was expecting an early decision on Mr. Thakre's application too. Under these circumstances your letter was only acknowledged. The wording in my letter of the 14th is not very happy but I only meant that after consultation I shall intimate the name. There was no idea of delaying. Please excuse me for unhappy construction.

On the 16th morning I learnt by telephone from Nagpur that the application was rejected. That very day, i.e. on the 16th, I posted you a letter, intimating to you the alternate candidate. Unfortunately this letter did not reach you in time. If I had the slightest desire to evade or delay I would not have posted the letter on the 16th. The date for nomination for this constituency was the 23rd. There was a clear week's time to get your sanction. I hope my letter of the 16th will convince you that there was nothing of the kind in my mind as you have hinted in your letter of the 17th. I have carried out your instructions carefully and fully.

Respected Sardarji, I again assure you that I shall ever carry out your instructions without the slightest evasion. A line in reply that the misunderstanding has been removed will give me immense consolation.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Brijlal Biyani

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

446

22 February 1946

My dear Biyani,

I have received your letter of the 20th inst. I know that you would not do anything against my instructions and on that account your assurance is unnecessary. I waited for your reply and you made no reference about it in your subsequent letters and telegrams, so I thought that there was something unusual, as already I had received a suggestion that you were thinking of putting Sjt. Deshmukh at the last moment as a substitute. You are very punctual in your correspondence and the delay coupled with the warning given made me feel that there was something in it and therefore I had to send the telegram. Even after the telegram, there was some misunderstanding and you had to telephone. However, this is of no consequence.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Brijlal Biyani
Akola

447

20 February 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your telegram of the 18th inst. reading:

"NEWSPAPER REPORTS ABOUT FINAL LIST UNBELIEVABLE. PRAY INFORM CORRECT LIST. IF REPORT TRUE DECISION UNJUST. SEEMS NAGPUR PROVINCIAL CONGRESS RELEGATED TO POSITION PARTY. GREAT DISSATISFACTION PREVAILS AMONGST WORKERS. PRAY FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO PLACE CORRECT FACTS BEFORE YOU AND CONVINCE YOU OF THE INCORRECTNESS OF THE

REPORTED DECISION. CHANGES IN LIST UTMOST NECESSARY IN THE INTEREST OF PROVINCE AND ITS WELFARE. PRAY DO NEEDFUL IMMEDIATELY."

I have also read in the Press that Sjt. Avari is fasting as a protest. Perhaps Nagpur is the only place in the whole of India where such protests and demonstrations are staged against the Central Board's selections. I can only invite your attention to Gandhiji's article giving the best advice about our desire to rush into these assemblies. Unless this is checked, we are likely to lose what we have gained by our sacrifices. Why should people, who make so many sacrifices in the struggle, expect return for these sacrifices by way of compensation and claim to go to the councils? They render their sacrifices worthless and discredit the organisation. Instead of giving strength to the Congress they try to weaken it. There must be some finality to the decisions. There can be no appeal or revision of these decisions and the date of nomination will also be over now.

Your provincial board had been of no help to us. In the first place, your Board which consisted of 15 delegated its powers to 6; delegated powers cannot be delegated to anybody but these 6 in their turn delegated their powers to one man, who in fact brought no report as required by the Central Board. There was no help from the province in the matter of selection as was required according to its resolution. The Central Board got your proposals very late; otherwise they would have been disposed of at Delhi along with the Mahakoshal and Berar proposals. Your board, instead of being helpful, has been more or less obstructive. Even after the selections, it is trying to create difficulties. This is not the way in which your province can either build or maintain its reputation in the Congress organisation or outside. You must accept the decisions loyally and try to create an atmosphere in which there will be no contest.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Secretary
Nagpur Provincial Congress Committee
Nagpur

Jubbulpore
26 February 1946

Revered Sardar Sahib,

Except in the case of the Backward Tribes constituency, for which nomination papers will be filed today, nominations for all constituencies are over. Besides one European, one Anglo-Indian and two Muslim Leaguers, 18 Congressmen have been returned unopposed, all from Mahakoshal. In three constituencies, including that of Thakur Chedi Lal, there are no caste Hindu candidates to oppose our candidates but as there are two Harijans in each of them the Congress caste Hindu and the Congress Harijan candidates could not go unopposed. A man of absolutely no importance has been set up against Shuklaji by the Hindu Mahasabha out of spite.

In the district of Saugor, Messrs Sapre, Vasudeo Prasad Srivastava and Gopilal Srivastava, all Congressmen, are opposing Messrs Shrikrishna Selot, Swami Krishnananda and B.L. Jain, the authorised Congress candidates. The brain behind are Mr. Sapre and his Maharashtrian friends, and the two Srivastavas are merely tools in their hands. But for their rebellion these three seats would have gone unopposed as the Hindu Sabhaite opponent of Mr. Jain offered to withdraw if the rebel Congressman did the same. Although the dates for the withdrawal have passed I still believe the rebels will give up their opposition. If they do not, they will have to forego their securities.

In the district of Jubbulpore we have to fight only in Murwara Rural and in the Labour constituency of Mr. Kalappa. The real difficulty is in Mr. Kalappa's constituency. To add to difficulties disgruntled Congressmen, more wicked than those of Saugor, have openly supported Mr. Kalappa and quietly set up non-Congressmen against him. Out of four of Mr. Kalappa's opponents we are trying to get withdrawn as many as possible. As I have not been in touch with labour I have not yet been able to gauge the situation. However, nothing will be left undone to secure success for Mr. Kalappa.

Yours sincerely,
D.P. Mishra

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

2 March 1946

My dear Mishra,

I have received your letter of 26 February. I am glad about the 18 uncontested returns, but I am sorry to hear that some Congressmen have thought it fit to rebel against the organisation and file their nomination papers against some of the Congress nominees. Notices should be issued against them for disciplinary action without delay.

I have written to Shuklaji about Sri Kashiram Pandey. I must get all the facts about him as it was wrong of him to have obtained ex parte decision from Maulana after having failed in his attempt with me here. At present, I shall say nothing more about it, but I wish to know all his antecedents and the comparative merits between him and the candidate who was first selected by the Central Board. It is very unfair that the candidate selected by the Board was let down without being given an opportunity of hearing.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. D.P. Mishra
Jubbulpore

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TELEGRAM

6 March 1946

Pandit Shukla and Chedi Lal,

MAULANA WRITES HEARING APPEAL HE FOUND SHEER INJUSTICE DONE TO KASHIRAM PANDEY. WIRED TO PROVINCIAL BOARD WAITED REPLY FIVE DAYS NO SATISFACTORY REPLY RECEIVED AND DECIDED IN HIS FAVOUR. WIRE ALL PARTICULARS AND COMPARATIVE MERITS OF CANDIDATES CONCERNED.

VALLABHBHAI

EXTRACT FROM R. S. SHUKLA'S LETTER TO SARDAR PATEL
DATED 15 MARCH, 1946

. . . The position of our candidates is very sound except that of Mr Kalappa. I think Mishraji will manage it. I believe we shall have cent per cent success. I have visited all the important centres of the constituency of Moulvi Maqbur Ahmed, our Congress candidate. His position is improving every day and I hope he too may succeed....

18 March 1946

My dear Ravishankar,

I have received your letter of the 15th inst. today.

You seem to have made no arrangements about redirecting the telegrams to you when you are on tour. When I received no reply to my telegram about your interference in Avari's fast for so many days, I was surprised. It is not right that telegrams should remain unanswered for a number of days. However, this is now an old story and unless Avari does any other stupid thing again, this matter is closed.

The elections will soon be over and you will have to think of the formation of a ministry. You must let me know immediately what your plan is or you may come down to Bombay for a day for discussion. We may have to go to Delhi by the end of this month.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Ravishankar Shukla
Raipur

Akola
17 March 1946

Respected Sardarji,

These are the facts which I know about Mrs. Sharadabai Angal who withdrew in favour of the Congress candidate. I did not know the lady before. It was after the withdrawal that she came to Akola and met me.

After having filed a nomination paper, Sjt. Kochar, president of the Amraoti Nagar Congress Committee, requested Mrs. Sharadabai to withdraw in favour of the Congress candidate. She agreed accordingly and filed her withdrawal. I also sent my congratulatory telegram to her. Next day after withdrawal she and her husband came to me suddenly and asked me to accompany them to Mrs. Radhadevi Goenka to request her to proceed to Amraoti immediately and to donate something for starting some institutions to work among the ladies. I told them both that it was not proper for them to approach Mrs. Goenka for donations immediately after the withdrawal. Both of them were upset. I told them that the only thing that I could do was to arrange the meeting between Mrs. Angal and Mrs. Goenka, and Mrs. Angal could then speak to Mrs. Goenka what she thought proper. In the evening they met and talked. Mrs. Goenka did not like the way in which she was approached. She could not go to Amraoti immediately as her daughter was ill. On this Mrs. Angal went dissatisfied and then came the letter that I have received, copies of which have been sent to you.

There is no truth in her allegations.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Brijlal Biyani

20 March 1946

My dear Brijlal,

I have your letter of the 17th inst. It was indiscreet on your part to arrange a meeting between Mrs. Angal and Mrs. Goenka for the purpose of securing a donation from her soon after Mrs. Angal's withdrawal from the contest. You should have told them that you could not be a party to any such thing. If she had given any donation, it would have been interpreted as a bribe promised for the withdrawal. She was wise to refuse but you could not muster courage to say no. She has sent copies of her letter to Bapu and also to other leaders of the Congress. This is an unnecessary scandal arising out of that meeting which should not have been encouraged at all.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Brijlal Biyani
Akola

EXTRACT FROM V. R. KALAPPA'S LETTER, DATED 15
APRIL 1946, TO SARDAR PATEL

I am glad to report to you that all the three Congress-minded rivals withdrew at the eleventh hour in my favour. As a matter of fact Sri Hari Prasad Pathak, after declaring his withdrawal at a public meeting, actively worked for my success. All is well that ends well.

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New Delhi
17 April 1946

My dear Kalappa,

I have your letter of the 15th instant. Since then I have seen the results in the Press. I am glad that we have won all through. Let us hope that our party in the Assembly will justify its position, as also the confidence placed in them by the electorate.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri V.R. Kalappa
Nagpur

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TELEGRAM

Nagpur
7 April 1946

Sardar Patel
New Delhi

POSITION CRITICAL. KINDLY ADVISE. SHUKLAJI DANI AND DAGA
REACHING RAIPUR ELEVENTH PREFERABLY BY AIR.

PRATAPISINGHIRAO BHONSLE

458

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
7 April 1946

Ravishankar Shukla
Raipur

BHONSLE WIRES QUOTE POSITION CRITICAL. KINDLY ADVISE. SHUKLAJI
DANI AND DAGA REACHING RAIPUR ELEVENTH PREFERABLY BY AIR
UNQUOTE DO NEEDFUL.

VALLABHBHAI

373

Raipur
12 April 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Your wire was duly received. The voting for the Landholders and Commerce constituencies is over today. Everything is all right here. Results of the elections are turning out satisfactorily.

We are holding our party meeting on the 21st instant. Is it necessary to inform Maulana [Azad] Sahib and invite him? Or will it do to send information to the office of the Parliamentary Board at Bombay?

Although I have not met Mr. Dharmadhikari, I am reliably informed that he and his friends want Gokhale and P.K. Deshmukh as ministers from Berar. This of course means that both ministers would be from East Berar. I, however, think this should not stand in the way of their selection. I am inclined to agree to this proposal. On the other hand Berar friends inform me that Mr. Biyani wants Mr. Kanade Shastri and Dr. Khedkar. Mr. Shastri has all his life-time been an anti-Gandhiite and in my opinion his selection as a candidate was a mistake. Dr. Khedkar is a man of no education so far as I know. He has picked up some knowledge of homoeopathy and calls himself a doctor. He is thoroughly lacking in culture and is not expected to be a good member of a united team. I am told in order to thrust these two undesirables upon us, Mr. Biyani is planning to call a meeting of the MLAs from Berar before we meet as a party.

such group meeting has taken place in Mahakoshal. I understand the Marathi CP friends also do not approve of such regional grouping. Mr. Joshi, I am informed, is also opposed to this move. But I think he can not persuade Mr. Biyani to give up the idea.

In Mahakoshal a number of friends are pressing me to include Thakur Chedi Lal in addition to Messers Mishra and Mehta. No one from Mahakoshal is opposed to Mr. Mishra but some want Mr. Mehta to be dropped. Both myself and Mishraji do not wish to sacrifice Mr. Mehta. Will it be possible to include Thakur Chedi Lal in addition to Mishraji and Mehtaji? We shall have a cabinet of nine instead of eight. That is all.

I would like to have your final advice regarding Thakur Chedi Lal. I may inform you that by his inclusion some complications which may otherwise arise will be avoided. But I shall abide by your advice.

Yours sincerely,
R. Shukla

PS.

In order to avoid delay I am also sending a copy of this letter to your Bombay address. I shall be in Raipur till the 19th and in Nagpur from the 20th onwards.

460

16 April 1946

My dear Ravishankar,

I have received your letter of the 12th inst. regarding the formation of a ministry. I think it will be better for you to come here with Dada Dharmadhikari and Biyaniji [as] soon after your election as leader as is convenient so that we can discuss the question in all its aspects. Most of the points affecting its formation [had] been discussed when you were here on the last occasion. But you have raised some points which require consideration. If there is conflict between Biyaniji and Dada Dharmadhikari regarding selection of ministers from Berar, I would like to hear both of them before final advice is given. If they both agree amongst themselves and you are also agreeable, there could be no difficulty, but if there are differences, we must hear all concerned before a decision is taken. About Thakur Chedi Lal, Maulana Sahib holds a very low opinion [of him] and the change of the Central Board's decision in the matter of selection of one candidate was due to Thakur Chedi Lal's indiscretion. I do not think it would be wise to expand the ministry at this stage, except for the inclusion of one Harijan, if necessary. You must therefore inform Dada Dharmadhikari and Biyaniji and fix a date for coming here.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pt. Ravishankar Shukla
Raipur

461

TELEGRAM

Raipur
14 April 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

KINDLY GIVE AUTHORITY FOR CONVENING CONGRESS MEMBERS
MEETING FOR ELECTING LEADER ON 21ST TO AVOID OBJECTIONS.

SHUKLA

462

TELEGRAM

15 April 1946

Ravishankar Shukla
Raipur

YOU ARE AUTHORISED TO CALL PARTY MEETING TWENTYFIRST FOR
ELECTION LEADER.

VALLABHBHAI

463

New Delhi
16 April 1946

My dear Biyaniiji,

I have authorised Shuklaji to call a meeting of the Assembly Party on the 21st inst. The elections in Berar must now have been over. I do not know what has been the results but I expect you must have secured all the seats. The formation of the ministry has to be settled and soon after the election of the Leader is over, you, Dada Dharmadhikari and Shuklaji must come here for consultation. In Mahakoshal probably the old ministers will continue. In Nagpur Shri [R.K.] Patil and Dr. Hasan may be selected, but I have to consult Nagpur opinion

before I can give advice. In Berar Shri Gokhale, the old minister, will probably continue and the question of another minister will have to be settled. It may be necessary to take one Scheduled Caste man also, but looking to the strength of the Scheduled Caste members, Mahakoshal would have a claim, as they have the largest number of Scheduled Caste members from their province. In any case, there is no final decision taken so far and I have written to Shuklaji to fix a date in consultation with you and Dadasahib and he has been asked to come here with you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbbhai Patel

Shri Brijlal Biyani
Akola

464

17 April 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I was in due receipt of your wire on the 15th night and have communicated it to the president of the Berar Congress Committee and Dada Dharmadhikari. This settles the question of my authority to convene a meeting of MLAs of three different Congress provinces.

As regards provincial elections, we have succeeded in almost all the constituencies. We are sorry to find that our Congress Muslim candidate did not succeed as was hoped from all accounts the candidate had given us. By now you must have replied to my letters regarding ministry-making. Mr. Khandekar has come out successful with a thumping majority. Only one Harijan seat in Berar has been lost to us. Berar and Nagpur provinces give us eight Harijan and Mahakoshal eleven. We shall have to decide whether we should take Agnibhoj or Khandekar. I will let you know our final opinion after consulting friends at Nagpur on the 21 when we meet there.

I do not know whether you are aware of the march of events in Nagpur. The situation there is intriguing. A long article has appeared in The Independent of the 15th instant. I enclose herewith a copy of it for your information. It is accompanied by a copy of a letter I have received from the editor of The Independent, Mr. W. G. Sheorey, brother of Mr. Anant Sheorey who has, I believe, often met you in connection with nomination of candidates.

A copy of my reply to his letter is also enclosed. I am absolutely ignorant so far as to what part Dr. Dubey has played in the city elections of Nagpur. I know this much at any rate, that Dr. Dubey was mainly, if not solely, responsible for the grand success of our University candidate, Dr. Hasan. He was also helpful to me in some degree in inducing Lala Jainarain to withdraw in favour of our Congress candidate for commerce, Mullah Abdullah Taharbhahi. Beyond this I know nothing about Dr. Dubey's activities in the Nagpur city elections. I have issued a statement dissociating myself from all anti-Congress activities of the Mayo Hospital group as alleged by Mr. [W.G.] Sheorey. A copy of that statement is also enclosed herewith for your information. I am acquainting you with all the facts so that if any situation develops at Nagpur it will not take long for you to see things through. I hope we shall not be required to trouble you in this connection. The only trouble, and perhaps greater trouble, we anticipate is from Berar about which I have already written to you. But I hope better sense will prevail and history will not repeat itself.

Yours sincerely,
R. Shukla

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

465

New Delhi
21 April 1946

My dear Ravishankar,

I have received your letter of the 17th inst. I am not able to follow the Nagpur affair referred to in your letter and about Dr. Dubey's attitude. However, if any complaint comes to us from Nagpur, we shall look into it in the light of the facts you have given in your letter.

You have your party meeting today and I hope things will turn out smoothly. I am trying to have a talk with you on the telephone, but I have not yet been able to get the connection.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Ravishankar Shukla
Raipur

New Delhi
16 April 1946

My dear Dadasahib,

During the course of the week, I have received many telegrams from Damodar giving me information about the election results and I think now they are all over. It seems the Congress there has won almost all the seats, and that too with great credit. I am glad about the results and I congratulate you and your colleagues for the good work that you have been able to do in organising the election campaign.

I have asked Shuklaji to call a meeting of the Congress Assembly Party on the 21st for the purpose of electing a Leader. The election of the Leader will, I hope, be unanimous, as there is no one in the party who has any intention of standing against Shuklaji. The question of formation of a ministry has to be settled, and after the Leader is elected, it would be better if Shuklaji, you and Biyaniji would come here to discuss this question. So far as Mahakoshal is concerned, probably the old ministers will continue. In Nagpur we may have no difficulty, but I should like to know your views before I can give any advice. In Berar there may be some differences of opinion between Biyaniji and Vir Wamanrao but this should form no impediment. I have written to Shuklaji to fix a date in consultation with you and Biyaniji and to come here as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dada Dharmadhikari
Bajajwadi
Wardha, CP

467

TELEGRAM

Nagpur
22 April 1946

Sardar Patel
New Delhi

FOLLOWING RESOLUTION PASSED BY EXECUTIVE PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE QUOTE NOTE WITH REGRET SARDAR PATEL ASKED DHARMADHIKARI TO SUGGEST NAMES OF MINISTERS FROM NAGPUR PROVINCE TO LEADER WITHOUT CONSULTING EITHER PRESIDENT OR COMMITTEE. COMMITTEE SUGGESTS CHATURBHUJBHAI JASANI R. K. PATIL AND WANKHADE AS MINISTERS FROM THIS PROVINCE BESIDES MUSLIM AND HARIJAN. AT LEAST TWO BE TAKEN UNQUOTE INSTRUCT LEADER.

PRESIDENT
PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

468

New Delhi
25 April 1946

President
Provincial Congress Committee
Nagpur

Dear Friend,

I have received your telegram dated 22nd inst. suggesting the names of ministers and protesting against our calling Dada Dharmadhikari for consultation. I am surprised that your committee should have thought fit to pass such a resolution. The formation of ministry rests with the Prime Minister and it is for him to choose his own team. We have only to suggest or fix certain general principles and not the names of ministers. It is therefore unnecessary for us to consult any provincial Congress committee in this matter and we do not do so in any province. If you have any suggestions to make, you must approach the Premier.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

469

TELEGRAM

Nagpur
30 April 1946

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel •
New Delhi

ASSEMBLY MEETING SIXTH. • KINDLY GIVE DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS
RE SALARIES OF MINISTERS SPEAKER DEPUTY SPEAKER SECRETARIES
MEMBERS. BILL AWAITING DRAFT.

SHUKLA PREMIER

470

•
Chadwick House
Summer Hill
Simla West
2 May 1946

My dear Ravishankar,

I have received your letter of 29 April with its accompani-
ments. I am asking Acharya Kripalani to send you details about
the salaries fixed for the Ministers, the Speaker and the remunera-
tion and allowances fixed for the Assembly members. I am sure
you will get them before the meeting of your Assembly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Ravishankar Shukla

PS.

Since this letter was dictated, I got your telephone message
and hence I have to confirm our conversation that you can fix
Rs. 1,000 per month, excluding allowances for house and conve-
yance, for Ministers. The maximum that the Working Committee
has fixed is Rs. 1,500 per month but that is the maximum limit
allowed, and in Bombay and Bihar, the Ministers have fixed Rs.
1,000 (one thousand only) per month. It would, therefore, be
better to accept the same standard, as it would obtain uniformity

and avoid unnecessary criticism. For the Assembly members, the UP has fixed Rs. 200 per month but you are at liberty to reduce it if you can; you cannot go above it. This would be enough for the present, even if you do not get further information from Acharya Kripalani.

CHAPTER X
BENGAL, BIHAR & UP SCENE

471

Poona
11 October 1945

My dear Sarat,

Thanks for your telegram.

I was sorry to hear that you missed the train for ten minutes. It must have put you to a lot of inconvenience.

I am thankful to you for sending a special messenger to Maulana as the letter and the instructions I have given for him were urgent.

The scrutiny is over and the election campaign must have commenced in full swing. Please keep me informed of the nature and strength of opposition in all the constituencies, both Muslim and non-Muslim.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose
1, Woodburn Park
Calcutta

472

25 December 1945

My dear Sarat,

I have received your telegram and I am sorry that you could not get me on the telephone. I have tried my best for Sardul Singh but I do not think there will be any result.

You must have got my message sent through Nathalal [which I gave him on the] telephone.

What progress has been made since I left by your election board in connection with the provincial elections? Have you

formed the Scheduled Castes election board as settled by us and has it been done without any difficulty?

You have to devote more time in the districts of Bengal and rural areas for creating a proper atmosphere in the Muslim constituencies and also to be more careful in selecting the Muslim candidates, so that the lessons learnt in the Central Assembly elections may not be lost on us. The Central Assembly election results have done us considerable harm and we must try to nullify its effect.

You know we are to meet in the middle of January for your party meeting. Before that you have to invite all applications for the provincial elections and prepare your board's recommendations to be presented to the Central Board's meeting at the same time as the meeting of the Board will take place on or about that time in Delhi. Please keep me informed of the progress made from time to time.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose
Calcutta

473

Calcutta
29 December 1945

My dear Sardar,

Your kind letter of the 25th instant was to hand yesterday. I sent you just now the following telegram:

"YOUR LETTER 25TH THANKS. SCHEDULED CASTE ELECTION SUB-COMMITTEE FORMED AND NINETEEN SCHEDULED CASTE CANDIDATES ALREADY SELECTED. ARRANGEMENTS BEING MADE FOR MUSLIM ELECTIONS WITH MAULANA'S CO-OPERATION. LEAVING PUNJAB TOMORROW SHALL BE THERE SECOND TO SIXTH. ELECTION BOARD MEETING NINTH TO SIXTEENTH SELECTING CANDIDATES GENERAL HINDU SEATS AND RECOMMENDING CENTRAL BOARD. SHALL REACH DELHI SEVENTEENTH AND DISCUSS EVERYTHING FULLY. SHALL ALSO REPORT PROGRESS TIME TO TIME.—SARATBOSE."

Nathalal gave me your message. I wrote to him on the 27th instant and requested him to show my letter to you.

As regards the Scheduled Caste seats, I believe we shall be able to contest all the seats except possibly two.

As regards the Muslim seats, we are proceeding very carefully and trying to create a better atmosphere in the different constituencies so that there may not be another debacle.

Our election board's recommendations regarding the general Hindu seats will be placed before you by me on 17 January, if not earlier.

I trust you are keeping well.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sarat Chandra Bose

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Bombay

474

30 December 1945

My dear Sarat,

I have received your telegram of the 29th instant, from which it appears that you have already selected 19 Scheduled Caste candidates for the Assembly elections. I expect that the remaining 11 candidates will also be selected soon.

As you are going to Punjab for three days, I would like you to send me a full report of your impressions about our position in the Punjab as soon as possible on your return. We expect to meet in Delhi on 17 January.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose
Lahore

475

36 Wellington Street
Calcutta
3 January 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of the 26th. I have heard nothing from the Government of India yet.

With regard to the money for the lantern lectures, all I would say is that I had thought of this arrangement because this

was the surest method of reaching the Muslim masses. At present there is no touch between us and them. This would be one way of gathering the villagers round and telling them about the Congress and its ideals. Therefore the Rs. 35,000 that would be necessary for the campaign for 4 or 5 months. If, however, you do not approve of it, I will have call it off. Because I have been depending on finding the money for recurring expenditure of Rs. 7,500 a month for 50 workers from election money.

Yours sincerely,
B. C. Roy

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

476

8 January 1946

My dear Bidhan,

I have your letter of the 3rd regarding lantern lectures. I could not understand your proposal properly when I wrote to you. I now see that your scheme is intended to fit in with the election programme in the province. If that is so, its requirements can be adjusted in that programme. If you can persuade Prafulla Babu [Dr. P. C. Ghosh] and Shri Sitaram Seksaria, I will have no objection if they include that item also in the budget. You can take help from Ghanshyamdas [G. D. Birla] in including them to do so. That will, I think, solve your problem. Please write to me what the result is.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. B.C. Roy
36 Wellington Street
Calcutta

477

EXTRACT

93/3/2 Hari Ghose Street
Calcutta
3 January 1946

Revered Sardarji,

In Calcutta you spoke of "organisation" for Bengal. But how can an organisation function?

An organisation must have a unitary leadership in a person or programme. Both of these are lacking in Bengal. None of the known leaders enjoy the confidence of all the sections or groups of workers. Some one falls short of sacrifice, other of vision and the third for his rigidity or for his fads; and of the common programme the less spoken the better.

You know all the leftist and so-called rightist leaders. By leftists I mean those who are opposed to the official Congress policy or programme and also those who believe in Marxist or materialistic interpretation of history and by rightists I mean those who support the official Congress policy or are believers in Gandhiji's creed. Not a single group is ready to come to a working agreement with the other. Two groups may unite for undoing the activities of the third but no two groups will unite for giving some definite service. Each and every group has taken the ideology it professes in a very restrictive sense suitable to the personal capacities of its leader or leaders.

In this chaotic condition I think a broad enunciation of the policy of the Congress regarding the future constitution and right of the toiling masses and the programme for attaining the same may lead to some sort of agreement.

Yours humbly,
Sudhir Chandra Ray

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

478

8 January 1946

Dear Friend,

I have received your letter of the 3rd instant. You know we were in Calcutta for more than a fortnight only recently. Mahatma Gandhi is still there and he is trying his level best to induce Congressmen in Bengal to give up quarrels and party differences so that Bengal can be raised once again to its former premier place of pride. We also did our best during our stay. You are aware that we are in the midst of an election campaign to be organised all over India and it is impossible for us to neglect that work at this stage. It is, therefore, impossible for me to come there and take up the responsibility of organising the province. I am hoping, however, that the past five years' sufferings of Bengal

will not go in vain and Congressmen in the province will realise their responsibility.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Sudhir Chandra Ray
93/3/2 Hari Ghose Street
Calcutta

479

14/8 Gariahat Road
Ballygunge
Calcutta
3 January 1946

Dear Sir,

I am enclosing herewith a list of 22 Scheduled Caste candidates for the Provincial Assembly election. They were unanimously recommended by our Board and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as Chairman of the Central Election Board was pleased to nominate them on behalf of the Central Election Board.

There are altogether 30 Scheduled Caste seats. I believe we shall be able to recommend four more names. For the four remaining seats we have not yet got suitable candidates.

Yours sincerely,
Prafulla Chandra Ghosh,
Secretary,
Bengal Congress Election Board

The Secretary
Congress Central Election Board
Congress House
Bombay

480

9 January 1946

My dear Prafulla Babu,

I have received your letter of the 3rd instant along with a list of 22 nominations for the Scheduled Caste constituencies. Eight more nominations remain, but from your letter it appears

that you are only sending four more names when suitable candidates are found. Does this mean that the remaining four seats will be kept vacant by the Congress? Your letter does not say anything about it.

We are meeting in Delhi for the Central Assembly Party meeting on the 18th. I expect you will be there at that time because, in spite of what I had written to you, there is a possibility of the question being revived and the consequent trouble.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Prafulla Chandra Ghosh
Ballygunge
Calcutta

481

10 January 1946

My dear Sarat,

Our Delhi meeting of the Central Board has been expedited and so I am reaching Delhi on the 16th. The Bihar nominations will be considered first. I expect you will reach Delhi on the 17th, if not on the 16th.

More when we meet.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose
Calcutta

482

EXTRACT

Ram Nagar
Hazaribagh
29 November 1945

My dear Sardar Sahib,

May I take this opportunity to bring to your kind notice certain important matters concerning our Bihar Congress committee? I had long been in the Central Assembly. This

time I wanted and I do still want to enter the local Assembly. Perhaps you did not like it. You passed your orders that I should stand for the Central Assembly. I thought it my duty to obey this order and I willingly obeyed it. I do not know why this matter was at all referred to you. Most probably, Rajendra Babu wrote to you that I want to be one of the ministers and said in my favour that I am an honest man. To this you probably replied that honesty is not the only qualification for being a minister.

Will you kindly let me know whether I have been reported to you as devoid of all other qualifications necessary for being a minister? Sir, please do not make me a minister but for God's sake, please do not belittle my honesty. In my opinion, honesty, if true, is the sum total of great many qualities required of a man, fit to hold any responsible position in society. I trust you will not entrust any man with any responsible position if he has all other qualifications but he is dishonest. I know and I trust you will kindly agree that all other qualities without that of honesty are not only useless but rather dangerous to society.

My province needs my services. It is only the interested people who want to keep me out of the province. Sir, I am not a selfish man. If other people will make better ministers, I shall welcome and congratulate them and I shall be satisfied. But I have got a bitter experience of the [past] Congress Government in my province. There were four ministers. They were not members of a Cabinet. They behaved like four independent rulers, one having nothing to do with the other. . . .

With the greatest possible regards,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Ram Narayan Singh

483

18 December 1945

My dear Ram Narayan Singh,

I have received your letter of 29 November today after my return from Calcutta.

You have drawn a very ugly picture of your province in your letter. Surely you do not want to be mixed up in such a dirty affair, if it is so, by proposing to plunge yourself in the quarrels

of the ministry that may be formed. If Rajendra Babu gave you any undertaking or promise on the last occasion, it was a mistake. There can be no promise about ministership to be given to anybody in advance, as it is not in the power of any one person to do so. You are doing very useful work in your district in the backward class area and if you will allow your ambition to go beyond its limit you will lose your usefulness and will be one of those whom you describe to be undesirables.

I did write to Rajen Babu that honesty is not the only qualification for being given a ministership. It is indeed one of the chief qualifications but there are many other qualifications required. Nothing is reported to me about you, but I know you too well and therefore I thought that like me you are also best suited for doing work outside any office such as that of a ministry. You are doing good work in the district and the Central Legislature must give you full scope for your energies. That must give you full satisfaction.

If you want to see me, you can do so at any time in Bombay after making an appointment, but we will probably meet in Delhi at the time of your first party meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sri Ram Narayan Singh
Ram Nagar
Hazaribagh

484

Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat
8 January 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have already sent you the first list of selected candidates. Another list which deals with only a few constituencies will follow soon. It is possible that there may be some appeals against the provincial board's decision. As a member of the Central Board my position regarding these will be very anomalous. It would therefore be better if you invite B. [Babu] Sri Kirshna Sinha¹ and B. Anugraha [Narayan] Sinha² to be in Delhi on the 15th to meet you

¹ Congressman who became Premier of Bihar

² Congressman who became Finance Minister in Bihar

and the Election Board in this connection. Invitation has to be sent by wire here at Patna. This letter will reach you on the 10th and if you wire the same day they may have good time to start. Nominations have to be filed on the 20th instant in this province and therefore you have to take decisions soon—latest by the 15th.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

PS.

After writing the letter I saw in the papers that the Election Board would meet on the 19th instead of on the 15th. The Government has issued a communique announcing that nomination and scrutiny would take place from 18 to 22 January in Bihar. The Board's meeting would therefore be too late for sanctioning recommendations of names. I have wired to you and Maulana accordingly. I would ask you to expedite sanctioning but I trust there will be some appeals which you must decide and I have suggested that you should invite Sri Babu and Anugraha to advise you as I am not in a position to do so.

R.P.

485

TELEGRAM

Bombay
10 January 1946

Rajendra Prasad
Patna

SEND SRIKRISHNA SINHA AND ANUGRAHANARAYAN [Sinha] TO DELHI
FOR CONSULTATION. BOARDS MEETING SIXTEENTH.

VALLABHBHAI

486

TELEGRAM

Patna

4 February 1946

Vallabhbhai Patel
Karachi

BALRAMARAY CONGRESS CANDIDATE EAST CHAMPARAN DIED.
SANCTION PRAJAPATI MISRA AS SUBSTITUTE. AUTHORISE ME NOMI-
NATE CANDIDATE UPPER CHAMBER SEAT DARBHANGA IN PLACE
JANKIRAMAN MISRA WHO DECLINED.

RAJENDRAPRASAD

487

6 February 1946

My dear Rajen Babu,

I had your telegram of the 4th at Karachi and I sent you
a reply by telegram which is quoted below:

"PRAJAPATIMISRA'S NOMINATION EAST CHAMPARAN SANCTIONED. AUTHO-
RISE YOU NOMINATE UPPER HOUSE CANDIDATE DARBHANGA."

I returned last evening from Karachi. You must have seen
from the Press that we have made a coalition with the Syed and
Maula Bux groups but we have one or two waverers. The
League's strength is 27; the European group of three holds the
balance. The present Governor is pro-League and Liaquat
[Ali Khan] has gone there. It is possible that the Europeans
will ally with the League and form a Ministry but it will break
in the very first meeting of the Assembly, as the League party
consists of numerous office-hunters and corrupt people. They
are not likely to stand together.

I have not heard anything about your provincial elections,
particularly the Muslim constituencies. I hope good progress
is being made.

How about your health?

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Patna

PS.

The cheque for Rs. 501 returned to you for endorsement has been received back duly endorsed.

488

9 February 1946

My dear Satyanarayan,

I have received your wire asking for approval of Sjt. Suraj-narain's nomination for the Council seat from Gaya. I have already communicated my approval of the proposals received from Bihar and therefore perhaps your telegram is superfluous.

Your Leader, I understand, is not in Delhi and perhaps will not be able to return for some days. I am absolutely out of touch with the Central Assembly and you have not written to me anything. Please let me know how things are going on there and how the party is functioning. You must keep in touch with the Speaker and be helpful to him. I hope and trust that things are going on smoothly.

What have you done about Jamshedpur?

I hope Bihar elections are going on smoothly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Satyanarayan Sinha
Member, Central Assembly
New Delhi

489

12 February 1946

My dear Rajen Babu,

I have received a strange complaint from one Haji Saiyed Imamuddin Ahmad of Bankipore. I am loath to believe that the statements contained in the letter may be true but I am enclosing herewith a copy of it for immediate enquiry. Please write to me about the result of the enquiry and also to the person concerned. In case there is any truth in these allegations, something legitimate should be done to redress his grievance.

The Central Board meets on the 16th and subsequent dates from day to day till the proposals from Andhra, Tamil Nad,

Kerala and Orissa are finished. On the 16th, we will take up Nagpur. I do not know whether you will be able to come but this is a trying business and I must go through it all.

I got your letter and postcard from Wardha.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Sadaquat Ashram
P.O. Digaghat
Patna

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT

Bihar Landholders' Association
Mahalla Bhaunrpokher
P.O. Bankipore
Patna
8 February 1946

My dear Mr. Patel,

I am reporting to you one of the worst type of Congress cheat, of which I have been made a victim, and it runs as follows.

That through the insistence and great pressure of my friends, Mr. Manzoor Hassan Aijazi of Muzaffarpore, and Prof. Abdul Bari of Patna, I resigned my post of Inspector of Motor Vehicles for Tirhut division for contesting the Muslim League Vice-President, Mr. Jaffar Inam, from the Patna City Muslim Urban constituency. Before I resigned my post and agreed to contest the election Mr. Aijazi and Prof. Bari gave their words of honour to the following effect:

(1) That the Congress Government would reappoint me to the Government post which I am resigning just now, and till my appointment I shall get my pay from the Congress.

(2) That the Congress would meet all the election expenses for me.

On those undertakings and assurances by prominent men of the Congress party of Bihar I resigned my Government post and came headway to fight the Bihar Provincial Muslim League Vice-President. The date of polling is quite near at hand [but] the money to contest the election as promised and assured by these two prominent Muslim Congress leaders is not given to me nor any salary is paid, and up till now I have spent Rs. 700

to 800 from my own pocket over the election besides losing my permanent Government post, from which I had been drawing Rs. 400 salary per month.

Yours sincerely,

Haji Saiyed Imamuddin Ahmad

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25 March 1946

My dear Rajen Babu,

After you left Bombay, I got a letter from Sjt Damodar from Wardha stating that Sjt. Avari and his friends have been saying that they have been promised two seats after the elections. I have written to them that it is all false and that the award has been postponed till after the elections at the desire of Sjt. Avari himself.

I have been getting telegrams from Bihar containing suggestions about the formation of a ministry and I am enclosing herewith copies of same.

I understand from the Press that Maulana [Azad] is going there but I do not know if there is any truth in it. I am sure, however, that you must have got some instructions from him and I should like to know what he has to say.

It was your idea to issue a statement that the question of making any offer to the League does not arise in Bihar in view of the League leader's statement but I have not seen in the Press any such statement from you. Perhaps you have changed your mind because of Maulana's instructions. Please send me full information about the same.

The [British] delegation has come and we have to await till we get instructions from Maulana. Bapu will be going to Delhi on 1 April from here, reaching Delhi on the 2nd evening.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad
Patna

New Delhi
18 April 1946

My dear Rajen Babu,

I have received a letter from Shri Ram Narayan Singh, of which I am enclosing a copy and also a copy of my reply to him, for your information, as he is threatening to raise an ugly controversy in connection with the selection of Babu K. B. Sahai¹ as a minister. It seems he is labouring under some personal grudge against him; otherwise he would not have written in this strain.

I am also enclosing herewith a copy of a telegram received today from Daltonganj.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Babu Rajendra Prasad
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE I

29 Canning Lane
New Delhi
16 April 1946

Dear Sardar Sahib,

Kindly excuse me for this letter. I may not write to you any more. This too, I am not writing out of pleasure. My self-respect rather tells me not to write to you for your ill-treatment and disregard [of] my statements. But my love for the country and regards for you and our old relations urge upon me to approach you once more. You have done me a great injustice and also to Bihar that you did not take me in the Cabinet, as I am the most deserving of all others for any place in Bihar. But I have tolerated it in the past and can tolerate it even in future. But I cannot tolerate the rule of dishonest people whom you have appointed as our rulers.

Sardar Sahib, you are perfectly wrong to hold that honesty is not the only qualification for ministership. If a man is dishonest, what are the other

¹ Congressman of Bihar

virtues according to you which can entitle a person to hold this position? If a man is not honest, his all other virtues cannot possibly be used for the right cause. I therefore hold that a man must first be honest, and then alone he can be entrusted with any responsible job. Honesty first and any other virtues afterwards. I cannot conceive of any ruler doing good to the people if he is not honest. A wretched man like Babu K. B. Sahai will rule over me; why then I shall drive out the British?

Kindly enquire into the matter or allow me to fight the Bihar Government. I am writing to Rajendra Babu also and sending to him a copy of the statement I am going to get published in the Press. If you do not listen to me, I have no other alternative than to go to the people and the Press. Please save the situation. I am in a desperate mood.

With regards,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Ram Narayan Singh

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE II

New Delhi
18 April 1946

My dear Ram Narayan Singh,

I have received your letter of the 16th instant. No injustice has been done to you and you are unnecessarily harbouring a sense of resentment and injustice, simply because you are not taken in the Bihar Ministry. The selection of ministers chiefly depends upon the Prime Minister, who has to choose his own team, which would work harmoniously and as far as possible efficiently. It is difficult to accommodate all good people in the Cabinet, especially when there are many good men, as in Bihar. You have misunderstood our conversation as I understand from your letter.

What I told you was that mere honesty would not be enough, as it cannot be the only qualification for a place of responsibility, such as that of a minister. Undoubtedly, it is the most essential qualification, but there may be many honest men, who may not have ability to shoulder the responsibility of administration. That does not mean that a dishonest man could be preferred if he is efficient and able. Both qualifications are necessary.

You have made serious allegations of a general nature against Babu K. B. Sahai which are of a libellous nature, and it leads one to think that you have some personal prejudice or dislike against him, if not enmity.

You are a responsible man, holding a high position in public life and it would be improper to make such reckless allegations against a man who is chosen as a minister by your Prime Minister with the approval of Babu Rajendra Prasad, the acknowledged leader of your province. If you have any specific allegations to make against him and if you are prepared to substantiate them by proof, there will be no hesitation in ordering an enquiry against him. It is highly improper to threaten publication of serious and libellous statements against a fellow-worker, without first approaching the organisation to which he belongs or without first filing a complaint with the General Secretary of the Congress with proper evidence to substantiate the charges. Such a conduct would be regarded as inexcusable and may render any Congressman liable to disciplinary action. You seem to have written your letter in anger and I would advise you to think over what you have written in that letter calmly and try to see whether it would not be proper to withdraw that letter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Ram Narayan Singh
29 Canning Lane
New Delhi

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23 November 1946

Dear Mr. Sethi,

I have received your letter of the 17th inst. Rajen Babu had written to me after the AICC meeting at Bombay about the reinstatement of several officers and men suspended from Jamshedpur on political grounds. He had also written to me that he had not succeeded in his efforts. One Mr. Madan then saw me with a recommendation from Rajen Babu. It was after this that I wrote to Sjt. J.R.D. Tata, the chairman of the concern. He met me before he went to Jamshedpur, and on his return, I was informed that all the disputes were satisfactorily settled between the company and Prof. Abdul Bari, who represents labour.

About your proposal for candidature for the Provincial Assembly, I am not in a position to say anything at present, as I have not received any proposals from there. Much will, however, depend upon the nature of recommendations from the province.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sjt. Dev Raj Sethi, MLA
Jhansi City

8 August 1946

Dear Sardar Sahib,

Respectful greetings.

I am sending Shri Mukutdhari Singh with some papers. I know you are so busy with a variety of urgent matters. Still I hope you will spare a little time in listening to this complaint of mine.

It is regarding Prof. Abdul Bari. I had already referred this matter to you once. I will not encroach upon your time by a detailed letter. Mukut Babu will speak to you in person. If you could spare him some more time he would even read certain papers to you.

What we have to say in brief is that we could put up with the foul language of Bari Sahib, but it was beyond us to tolerate beating of our workers. Tell us what we should do. Please take necessary steps in the matter. I am also writing to Jawaharlal and Bapu.

Yours sincerely,
Jayaprakash Narayan

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

(Original in Hindi)

15 August 1946

My dear Jayaprakash,

I have received your letter of the 8th instant sent through a messenger to Wardha. Jawaharlalji has also received your letter and he has written to Prof. Abdul Bari about it. I have also written a letter to him. You know him well but with all his defects, everybody agrees that he is honest and hard-working. This is no defence for what is said against him. I had a long talk with Mukut Babu and I will try my best to set matters right.

I am going to Delhi on the 17th.

I hope you are doing well and keeping fit. Please convey my blessings to Prabha [wife of Jayaprakash Narayan]. I hope she is also keeping good health.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan
Patna

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Kadam Kuan
Patna
22 August 1946

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I thank you for your letter of 15 August. I am afraid the seriousness of the complaint I had made has been underestimated. However, the matter is in your hands and the hands of Jawaharlalji and Rajen Babu and I can only hope for the best.

Thanking you and with regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jayaprakash Narayan

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
30 August 1946

My dear Jayaprakash,

I have received your letter of the 22nd instant.

You are, I am afraid, mistaken in thinking that the seriousness of the complaint you had made has been underestimated. I have only pointed out to you the difficult nature of the problem due to Prof. Bari's personality and his own way of handling these labour problems. But that does not mean that I have attached no importance to your complaint. At present there is a possibility of a serious conflict between the management at Jamshedpur and labour. Dr. John Matthai is expected to go there in the first week of September to discuss matters in controversy with Prof. Bari. I do not wish to disturb him at this juncture but as

soon as this dispute is settled, I will call him and try to set matters right.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan
1 Narendra Place
Parliament Street
New Delhi

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29 December 1945

My dear Pantji,

I have not received acknowledgement of the amount of Rs. 35,000 sent to you along with my letter of 18 December.

Asaf Ali met me on his return from Madras on the 25th. He has not been able to settle the affairs there.

I had a talk with him about the question of leadership of the Assembly Party. He has realised the difficulties of the situation and agreed to stand aside. In fact, he himself had no such idea. It was Maulana [Azad] who suggested it to him and also to me. That trouble therefore ends there.

I have today received proposals of two candidates for the Christian constituency in the UP from Lal Bahadur [Shastri]¹ and he wants sanction immediately. This means again that I have to obtain sanction by a circular or give sanction without authority. The circular has been issued today and I expect telegraphic sanction.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
Naini Tal

¹ Started life as a social worker of Servants of the People Society founded by Lala Lajpat Rai; Minister for Police in Pant Cabinet in UP, 1946; joined Nehru Cabinet in 1952 and successively became Minister for Railways, Communications, Commerce and Industry and Home; Prime Minister in June 1964; died in Tashkent, January 10, 1966.

TELEGRAM

Bindhachal
8 January 1946

Sardar Patel
Congress
Bombay

YOUR LETTER UP CHRISTIAN CANDIDATE SANCTIONED.

ABUL KALAM AZAD

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

LIST OF 21 PROVINCES FORMED UNDER CONGRESS CONSTITUTION IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE ERA

- 1. Ajmer-Merwara**
- 2. Andhra**
- 3. Assam**
- 4. Baluchistan**
- 5. Bihar**
- 6. Bengal**
- 7. Bombay**
- 8. Delhi**
- 9. Gujarat**
- 10. Karnatak**
- 11. Kerala**
- 12. Mahakoshal**
- 13. Maharashtra**
- 14. Nagpur**
- 15. NWFP**
- 16. Punjab**
- 17. Sind**
- 18. Tamil Nadu**
- 19. United Provinces**
- 20. Utkal**
- 21. Vidarbha**

APPENDIX TWO

CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE—1945-46

1. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (President)
2. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu
3. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
4. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel •
5. Dr. Rajendra Prasad
6. Shri Pattabhi Sitaramayya •
7. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan
8. Shri Shankarrao Deo
9. Shri Govind Ballabh Pant
10. Dr. P. C. Ghosh
11. Shri Asaf Ali
12. Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
13. Shri J. B. Kripalani

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